

# COVID-19 Manager Toolkit

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Resources and best practices for  
managing, supporting, and leading a  
team through furloughs



- Supporting city staff through furloughs
- Resources for employees impacted by COVID-19
- Ways to build community while teleworking
- Teleworking Time Management

# Supporting City Staff through furloughs

Managing furloughs with empathy

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## Be honest and transparent.

- Explain the impact on employee benefits, and what can be expected down the road.
- Set an intention about what exactly you need to communicate, and then express that concisely. Clear messaging is vital from leaders, especially now.
- Be mindful of how each employee is uniquely impacted. Be prepared to offer resources to help them navigate personal challenges such as loss of income, benefits, support for well-being.
- Be transparent about impacts, unknowns, and where challenges lie.
- Listen deeply and pay attention to details. Closely observing the responses of your team is helpful right now.

## Stay in touch and provide mental and emotional support.

- Articulate when and how you will share information, and where more can be found.
- Reach out to employees on a regular basis to demonstrate empathy, offer support. Provide updates such as;
  - Current state of the Department/Bureau/City
  - Furlough timeline update
  - New and updated resources/information
- Give employees a go-to resource for questions and concerns.
  - EAP, virtual, mental health and engagement activities.
  - [Free, online professional development resources](#)

# Supporting City Staff through furloughs

Provide clarity and resources around benefits

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Encourage employees to access benefit resources.

## Financial Resources

[Various Leave Programs and donation options](#)

[Reducing deferred comp contribution and withdrawal options](#)

[Free EAP financial coaching and education options](#)

[Making changes to FSA or ways to spend down balances](#)

[Paid Sick Leave and Expanded FMLA Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.](#)

## Wellbeing and Mental Health Resources

[CityStrong program](#) - No cost counseling options through Cascade EAP and waived cost share through the health plans (same link).

[Whole Life Directions\(WLD\)](#) is a personalized emotional wellness program. This program provides instant access to tools and techniques to help you improve your mental health and overall health. Access code: City of Portland

Mental Health Focus - Waived co-pays for in-network mental health and substance abuse services are available at no cost to employees & their families with city health plans.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - [COVID-19 Resource and Info Guide](#)

# Supporting City Staff through furloughs

Resources for employees impacted by  
COVID-19

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## Accessing unemployment benefits

[OR Employment Department](#)

[WA Employment Department](#)

## Financial resources

[Oregon utility assistance](#)

[Utility assistance information from 211](#)

[Federal student loan forbearance](#)

[Emergency response loan from Innovative Changes](#)

[Tax relief information from the IRS](#)

## Food resources

[Oregon Food Bank food finder](#)

[List of schools providing free meals in Oregon](#)

[Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon](#)

[Restaurants offering free lunches for kids](#)

## Childcare and education resources

[Emergency childcare resources](#)

[Free educational resources](#)

# Ways to Build Community While Teleworking

Connection is a basic human need.

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In these difficult times, prioritizing personal interactions with your colleagues lets them know they matter.



Make space for personal interaction.

Avoid becoming exclusively task focused. Make time for personal interaction with your team to encourage engagement and staying connected.

- Take the time for a daily (or at least consistent) check-in with individuals for a quick hello and to ask how their workload is feeling
- Schedule regular virtual team meetings to ensure no one is left out of important information sharing and interactions.
- Communicate via phone or video chat when possible. These forms of communication are more personal and can help to boost morale and improve decision making by offering fuller, more in-depth communication.

## Virtual Socials and Chat Sessions

Consider hosting virtual social activities or chats to showcase achievements and share fun stories from the days/ weeks past. Provide a theme, question, or topic of discussion. Include an engagement activity and give everyone some video time to show their face, say a few words if they choose to do so.

# Teleworking Time Management

Keeping remote employees engaged

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## Be mindful of unique work environments.

Keep in mind that each person's remote work environment is unique and presents new working habits and challenges.

- Acknowledge the challenges of a non-traditional workspace and be willing to discuss alternatives.
- Create space for your team to discuss distractions they may face.
- Allow for flexibility in scheduling to ensure work life balance.

## Set a work routine and have a plan for each day.

- Take five minutes to create a daily schedule for you and anyone else at home with you and put it where everyone can see it.
- Take regular breaks- get out and enjoy a change of scenery.
- Identify and eliminate your biggest time wasters. It's the little things that can make the biggest difference.
- Make it a point of logging off from your remote work at the same time you would typically leave the office. It's important to build in time to rest and recharge so you can work sustainably.

## Maintain accountability.

- Determine what is sustainable in terms of workload, hours.
- Clearly communicate what is expected of your teams daily, weekly, monthly
- Create a method for each person to communicate progress, roadblocks, and completion of new tasks.
- Discuss how productivity and deliverables will be assessed.