



# Harris County, Texas

1001 Preston St., Suite 934  
Houston, Texas 77002

## Staff Report

**File #:** 21-606

**Agenda Date:** 2/26/2021

**Agenda #:** 1.

		YES	NO	ABSTAIN
<b>To:</b>	Harris County Commissioners Court	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Through:</b>	Director Name, Title, Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Prepared By:</b>	Name, Title, Department	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Subject:</b>	Title of the Item	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Project ID (If applicable):</b>				

**Purpose and Request:**

Request by Budget Management for approval to extend authorization allowing employees to be paid for all hours worked directly related to the response and recovery of COVID-19 for the period of February 27-March 12, 2021, temporarily amend the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures to suspend the 75-day benefit waiting period for new employees until March 31, 2021, and the required health care provider's statement after the fourth day of absence for sick leave or family sick and wellness leave until June 18, 2021.

**Background and Discussion:**

*[INSTRUCTIONS: In this section should concisely provide any background and analysis that the Commissioners Court needs to fully understand the action being requested. Please limit background to 3-4 sentences and include any reference to when this item was previously considered by Court. Background should include reference to study or order that led to this item or if the item is a result of compliance with any specific law or statutory requirements.]*

**Fiscal Impact:**

*[INSTRUCTIONS: A short description of the cost of the request and where you are requesting funding from. No more than 2 sentences. In addition please fill out the table below. This includes financial impact to the current fiscal year and subsequent fiscal years along with the source of funding (general fund, grant, etc.). If the amount is within the current budget, please indicate the amount from 'Existing Department Budget'. If all of or part of the request is a new expense, please indicate funding source in the space provided.]*

<b>Fiscal Summary</b>			
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 20-21</b>	<b>FY 21-22 Projected</b>	<b>Future Years Projected [3 additional years]</b>
<b>Service Impacted:</b> <i>[Please specify division where expenditure is incurred]</i>			
Existing Budget			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
Existing Department Budget			

Please Identify Funding Source, Special Revenue, Grant, etc.			
[INSERT FUNDING SOURCE]			
<b>Total Sources</b>			

**Alternatives:**

*[INSTRUCTIONS: In this section you should briefly discuss any viable alternatives, including the benefits and consequences of each. Include subtitles on the first line of each alternative to identify it. If appropriate, the financial impact of each alternative can be discussed. If taking no action is a viable alternative it should also be discussed, including any financial or other impacts that would result.]*

**Alignment with Strategic Objective:**

*[INSTRUCTIONS: Please write out the Department Strategic Objective impacted by this item.]*

**Attachments:**

*[INSTRUCTIONS: Please include a list of backup for this item with a short description of each if more than one.]*

Presented to Commissioners Court

February 26, 2021

Approve: C/E

**To:** Harris County Commissioners Court

**Through:** Shain Carrizal, Senior Director of Human Resources & Risk Management

**Prepared By:** Erika Owens, Director of Human Resources

**Subject:** Compensation of County Employees Responding to COVID-19 and Temporary Amendments to the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures

**Project ID (If applicable):**

**Purpose and Request:**

Approval to extend authorization allowing employees to be paid for all hours worked directly related to the response and recovery of COVID-19 for the period of February 27-March 12, 2021, and temporarily amend the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures to suspend the 75-day benefit waiting period for new employees until March 31, 2021 and suspend the required health care provider's statement after the fourth day of absence for Sick Leave or Family Sick and Wellness Leave until June 18, 2021, subject to Department Head discretion.

**Background and Discussion:**

Since many Harris County employees who are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic can only take minimal time off, this policy allows certain employees to be paid for all hours worked and not lose earning compensatory time when they reach the 240 maximum hours. A temporary amendment to the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures reduces the amount of time a new employee's medical coverage becomes effective so that they and their families can seek medical treatment for COVID related illnesses. Another amendment also suspends the required health care provider's statement after the fourth day of absence since many health care providers are seeing patients virtually because of the COVID pandemic.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The cost of County employees working over 40 hours per week in the response and recovery to COVID-19 is approximately \$2M per pay period for all funds. This estimated cost includes both hours paid and compensatory time earned in excess of 40 hours per week. It should be noted that Harris County is seeking 75%-100% reimbursement of these costs through FEMA's Public Assistance Program. The costs below only represent the one pay period covered under this request.

<b>Fiscal Summary</b>			
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 20-21</b>	<b>FY 21-22 Projected</b>	<b>Future Years Projected [3 additional years]</b>
<b>Service Impacted:</b> <i>[Please provide service or division where expenditure will be used]*</i>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Existing Budget	<u>N/A</u>	<u>\$2.0M</u>	<u>N/A</u>
Additional Appropriation Requested	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>\$2.0M</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
Existing Department Budget	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>N/A</u>
General Fund	<u>N/A</u>	<u>\$1.8M</u>	<u>N/A</u>
All Other Funds	<u>N/A</u>	<u>\$0.2M</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<b>Total Sources</b>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>\$2.0M</u>	<u>N/A</u>

**Alternatives:**

N/A

**Alignment with Strategic Objective:**

Recruiting, retaining and empowering an effective, healthy workforce that reflects the diverse communities served by Harris County.

**Attachments:**

Compensation of County Employees Responding to COVID-19 and Temporary Amendments to the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures



# HARRIS COUNTY BUDGET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(713) 274-1100  
1001 Preston St. #500 Houston TX 77002  
<http://budget.harriscountytexas.gov/>

## COVID-19 Agenda Item

February 23, 2021

To: County Judge Hidalgo, and  
Commissioners Ellis, Garcia,  
Ramsey, and Cagle

Fm: Shain Carrizal *HSC*

Re: **Compensation of County Employees Responding to COVID-19 and Temporary Amendments to the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Human Resources & Risk Management recommends extending the following items as previously approved by Commissioners Court:

- Authorization allowing employees to be paid for all hours worked directly related to the response and recovery of the COVID-19 pandemic for the period of February 27, 2021 – March 12, 2021.
- Temporarily amend Section §9.0112 of the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures to suspend the 75-day benefit waiting period for new employees until March 31, 2021. New regular position employees will be eligible for group health benefits the first day of the pay period following 7 days of continuous employment.
- Temporarily amend Section §11.047 of the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures to suspend until June 18, 2021 the required health care provider's statement after the fourth day of absence for Sick Leave or Family Sick and Wellness Leave, subject to Department Head discretion.

Thank you for your consideration.

Attachment

ORDER OF COMMISSIONERS COURT

The Commissioners Court of Harris County, Texas, convened at a meeting of the Court virtually, February 26, 2021 with all members present except none

A quorum was present. Among other business, the following was transacted:

ORDER AUTHORIZING THE EXTENSION OF THE PERIOD FOR EMPLOYEES TO BE PAID FOR ALL HOURS WORKED DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE RESPONSE AND RECOVERY TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC FROM FEBRUARY 27, 2021 THROUGH MARCH 12, 2021 AND TEMPORARY AMENDMENT TO THE HARRIS COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Commissioner Cagle introduced an order and moved that Commissioners Court adopt the order. Commissioner Ellis seconded the motion for adoption of the order. The motion, carrying with it the adoption of the order, prevailed by the following vote:

Table with 3 columns: Name, Yes, No, Abstain. Rows include Judge Lina Hidalgo, Comm. Rodney Ellis, Comm. Adrian Garcia, Comm. Tom S. Ramsey, and Comm. R. Jack Cagle, all with checkmarks in the Yes column.

The meeting chair announced that the motion had duly and lawfully carried, and this order was duly and lawfully adopted. The order adopted follows:

IT IS ORDERED that:

- 1. Harris County and Harris County Flood Control District employees have the option to be paid for all hours worked directly related to the response and recovery efforts for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic for the period of February 27, 2021 through March 12, 2021.
2. Only work expected to be reimbursed through FEMA's Public Assistance Program or other sources should be considered under this Order. Departments should consult with Human Resources & Risk Management before paying employees for all hours worked to determine if it is expected to be reimbursed by FEMA or other sources.

Presented to Commissioners Court

February 26, 2021

Approve: C/E

3. Temporary Amendment to the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures be made as follows:
  - a. Section §9.0112 - The 75-day benefit waiting period for new employees will be temporarily suspended until March 31, 2021. New regular position employees will be eligible for group health benefits the first day of the pay period following 7 days of continuous employment.
  - b. Section §11.047 - Department Heads, at their discretion, be allowed to temporarily suspend the required health care provider's statement after the 4th day for absences related to COVID-19 until June 18, 2021.
4. All Harris County officials and employees are authorized to do any and all things necessary or convenient to accomplish the purpose of this Order.