



# HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

## BUDGET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Administration Building

1001 Preston, Suite 500

Houston, TX 77002

(713) 274-1100

### AGENDA LETTER – COVID-19

August 6, 2020

\* See Attached Orders

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

Judge Lina Hidalgo

YES NO ABSTAIN

Comm. Rodney Ellis

Comm. Adrian Garcia

Comm. Steve Radack

Fm: Shain Carrizal *HSC*

Comm. R. Jack Cagle

Re: **Hazard Pay**

Request by Budget Management for approval of an order to allow departments to compensate certain Harris County employees hazard pay related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The estimated cost of \$8.3 million would be funded by the Public Improvement Contingency Fund, and any potential reimbursement would be made using the CARES Act allocation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Attachment

Presented to Commissioners Court

August 6, 2020

Approve: \*See Attached Orders

## **COVID-19 Hazard Pay Incentive**

### **Description**

According to the *Harris County COVID-19: Resource Guide for Conducting County Business* by the Harris County Engineer and the Continuity of Government (COG) Task Force, all departments are strongly encouraged to continue telework, whenever possible and feasible with business operations. The COVID-19 Hazard Pay Incentive is additional pay for those essential Harris County employees who cannot completely telework and are performing hazardous duty or work involving physical hardship, as a result of COVID-19.

### **Eligibility**

Regular, part-time and temporary Harris County employees (excludes contract employees) are eligible if they meet all the following criteria:

- Essential employees as determined by the Department Head;
- Employees required to report to a County worksite that cannot completely telework (individuals who primarily telework are not eligible);
- Employees who work a majority (>50%) of their schedule at a County worksite or in the field;
- Employees in predominantly public facing positions or employees physically responsible for mitigating or responding to COVID-19. This involves regular, in-person interaction with the general public or with co-workers who perform such work, or by regularly physically handling items handled by the public or co-workers who handle such items.

### **Amount**

Tier 1 - \$100 per pay period (\$217 per month) for employees working 30 or more hours per week on average.

Tier 2 - \$50 per pay period (\$108 per month) for employees working at least 20 hours but less than 30 hours per week on average.

### **Effective Date**

August 15, 2020 – December 18, 2020 (or sooner if the public health emergency expires or if discontinued by Commissioners Court).

### **Projected Cost and Reimbursement**

County departments reported 10,709 employees working at a Harris County site. Assuming 70% of these employees met the eligibility requirements and were paid in Tier 1, the projected cost through December 18, 2020 would be \$8.3 million. CARES Act funds may reimburse this cost for public safety, public health, health care, human services, and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

### **Additional Information**

Payment of the COVID-19 Hazard Pay Incentive is subject to Department Head approval. The incentive is required to be included as part of an employee's regular rate of pay in computing the employee's overtime pay. The incentive may be discontinued at any time by Commissioners Court.

## ORDER OF COMMISSIONERS COURT

The Commissioners Court of Harris County, Texas, met in special session at its regular term, virtually, on August 6, 2020, with all members present.

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

**ORDER AUTHORIZING COVID-19 HAZARD PAY INCENTIVE BEGINNING ON AUGUST 15, 2020 THROUGH DECEMBER 18, 2020 FOR CERTAIN ESSENTIAL HARRIS COUNTY EMPLOYEES WHO ARE PERFORMING HAZARDOUS DUTY OR WORK INVOLVING PHYSICAL HARDSHIP AS A RESULT OF COVID-19 AND WHO QUALIFY FOR CARES ACT OR FEMA REIMBURSEMENT**

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

	Yes	No	Abstain	
Judge Lina Hidalgo	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presented to Commissioners Court
Comm. Rodney Ellis	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comm. Adrian Garcia	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	August 6, 2020
Comm. Steve Radack	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comm. R. Jack Cagle	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approve: C/R

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 essential regular, part-time and temporary Harris County Employees (excluding contract employees) who qualify for CARES Act or FEMA reimbursement and who work a majority of their schedule at a County worksite in predominately public facing positions or are physically responsible for mitigating and responding to COVID-19 receive COVID-19 Hazard Pay as follows:

**Amount**

Tier 1 - \$100 per pay period (\$216.67 per month) for employees working 30 or more hours per week on average.

Tier 2 - \$50 per pay period (\$108.33 per month) for employees working at least 20 hours but less than 30 hours per week on average.

Departments Heads are responsible for determining their employees' eligibility for COVID-19 Hazard Pay, including:

1. designating essential employees; and
2. identifying essential employees who are in predominantly public facing positions or employees physically responsible for mitigating or responding to COVID-19. This involves regular, in-person interaction with the general public or with co-workers who perform such work, or by regularly physically handling items handled by the public or co-workers who handle such items.

The effective date of this Order is August 15, 2020 - December 18, 2020 unless the public health emergency expires or if discontinued by Commissions Court.

Harris County and its Departments shall support and work in conjunction with Human Resources & Risk Management and the Harris County Attorney's Office to implement the Order.

All Harris County officials and employees are authorized to do any and all things necessary or convenient to accomplish the purpose of this Order.

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**ORDER AUTHORIZING COVID-19 HAZARD PAY INCENTIVE  
BEGINNING ON AUGUST 15, 2020 THROUGH DECEMBER 18, 2020  
FOR CERTAIN ESSENTIAL HARRIS COUNTY EMPLOYEES WHO ARE PERFORMING  
HAZARDOUS DUTY OR WORK INVOLVING PHYSICAL HARDSHIP AS A RESULT OF COVID-19**

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

	Yes	No	Abstain	
Judge Lina Hidalgo	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presented to Commissioners Court
Comm. Rodney Ellis	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comm. Adrian Garcia	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	August 6, 2020
Comm. Steve Radack	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comm. R. Jack Cagle	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approve: E/G

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 essential regular, part-time and temporary Harris County Employees (excluding contract employees) who would not qualify for CARES Act or FEMA reimbursement and who work a majority of their schedule at a County worksite in predominately public facing positions or are physically responsible for mitigating and responding to COVID-19 receive COVID-19 Hazard Pay as follows:

**Amount**

Tier 1 - \$100 per pay period (\$216.67 per month) for employees working 30 or more hours per week on average.

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