



City of Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell

Office of the Mayor
City of Seattle
Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

Executive Order 2022-02 COVID-19 Civil Emergency – Directing City departments to Combat the Spread of COVID-19 and Limit the Harm Caused to Residents.

An Executive Order to further extend actions to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and to mitigate the impact of the public health emergency on the people of Seattle.

WHEREAS, former Mayor Jenny A. Durkan proclaimed that a civil emergency exists in the City of Seattle in the Mayoral Proclamation of Civil Emergency dated March 3, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 2020-03 directed Seattle Public Utilities and Seattle City Light to exercise flexibility with customers, including instituting payment plans, and avoid utility shut-offs whenever possible; and

WHEREAS, on March 16 and 17, 2020, Emergency Orders were issued placing a temporary moratorium on residential evictions, as well as evictions of small business and non-profit organization commercial tenants, respectively; and

WHEREAS, while Seattle has been very successful in achieving a high rate of vaccination against COVID-19 among the City's residents, the Omicron variant poses a new and serious threat due to its heightened contagiousness; and

WHEREAS, with the spread of the Omicron variant, reported COVID-19 cases are increasing at a staggering rate, with the number of new cases equaling over 15,000 per day in Washington State on January 6, an increase of 4,000 in just one day. The number of new cases is far higher than at any previous point in the pandemic, and the wave of new cases has yet to peak. In King County, the seven-day average case rate is more than four times the county's previous peak; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 hospitalizations in King County are up fivefold since mid-December and now exceed the previous peak. Health experts expect hospitalizations to continue to rise and health system stress to continue to increase for weeks even after cases peak; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 crisis has had a significant impact on the local economy. Improvements in economic conditions since the start of the pandemic are now threatened by widespread disruptions due to the Omicron variant;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor of Seattle, hereby direct:

1. An Interdepartmental Team (IDT) consisting of, but not limited to, the Office of Housing, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Office for Civil Rights, Office of Economic Development, and Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections to be formed. Such team shall within 30 days of the execution of this Executive Order:
 - a. Present to the Mayor's Office a plan to issue a report which outlines ways to streamline and coordinate the acquisition and distribution of all available funds or resources meant to assist tenants and small landlords mitigate the effects of COVID-19 related evictions, rent arrears, or mortgage payments.
 - b. Present to the Mayor's Office a plan to issue a report which outlines ways to enhance existing data gathering procedures that will enable the City to better understand the effectiveness and consequences of the current residential and commercial eviction moratoria.
 - i. The forthcoming report shall include, but not be limited to, data pertaining to the number of evictions that have been prevented by the moratoria; how many evictions are estimated to occur once the moratoria expire or when the Six-Month Defense Ordinance expires; the total outstanding rent arrears in Seattle; how many rental properties have been foreclosed or are in danger of being foreclosed due to failure to pay rent; and the total amount, and source of, rental assistance provided to tenants and small landlords.
 - c. Present to the Mayor's Office a plan to develop an online portal which tenants and small landlords can use to find and expeditiously access available resources.
 - d. Present to the Mayor's Office a plan to issue a report which outlines methods and procedures to evaluate the eviction moratoria's effectiveness.
 - i. The forthcoming report shall include, but not be limited to, an assessment of whether as a result of the current eviction moratoria:
 1. Structural or substantial damage to properties have gone unaddressed and as a result conditions have deteriorated to a point that tenant health or safety is threatened.
 2. Victims of domestic violence are being forced to cohabitate with their abusers.
 3. The enforcement of protective orders, anti-harassment orders, no contact orders, or restraining orders are being impeded and endangering those tenants the orders are meant to protect.
 4. Tenants, small landlords, or property managers have been endangered by those who exhibit violent or otherwise disruptive behavior yet are otherwise unable to be evicted under the current residential moratorium.
 5. Small landlords have been prevented from moving into properties they own resulting in financial hardship that will lead to the selling of existing affordable housing, and the reduction in overall housing stock.
2. The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections and Office of Housing to develop and implement an outreach and education plan to inform Seattle residents most at risk of eviction of the difference between landlord communications meant to inform tenants rent is past due and communications from courts or other officials that judicial proceedings are forthcoming or have been initiated. An initial report shall be presented to the Mayor within 30 days of the execution of this Executive Order.
3. The Office of Housing to form a work group comprised of three tenant advocates and three small landlords that will work directly with the Mayor to develop recommendations for steps to be taken after the residential and commercial eviction moratoria expire. This group shall be convened within 30 days of the execution of this Executive Order.

4. The Office of Intergovernmental Relations to evaluate the coordination of federal, state, county, and City efforts to acquire and distribute financial assistance to tenants and small landlords. An initial report shall be presented to the Mayor within 30 days of the execution of this Executive Order.
5. Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light, and any other appropriate City departments to present to the Mayor's Office a plan to evaluate the aggregate impact the utility relief flexible payment policies and shut-off policies have on utility rates, and what implications potential higher rates would have on low-income tenants, small landlords, and the impact on the availability of affordable housing in Seattle. An initial report shall be presented to the Mayor within 30 days of the execution of this Executive Order.
6. Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light, and any other appropriate City departments to identify and make available all tenant and small landlord utility assistance resources and deliver them in an expedited manner commensurate with the ongoing public health emergency.

Any questions regarding this Executive Order should be directed to Policy Director Dan Eder, Office of the Mayor.

Dated this 13th day of January, 2022.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce A. Harrell".

Bruce A. Harrell
Mayor of Seattle

