

## *Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:*

### State Employees

Late Thursday morning, the [Omaha World Herald](#) reported that the Nebraska Association of Public Employees, which represents 8,000 people, was calling on Gov. Ricketts to immediately allow more staff members to work from home.

"A disturbing number of state employees are still being required to report to offices and work locations, even though they are capable of working from home," the Nebraska Association of Public Employees stated in a letter to the governor. "This is in direct contrast with your 'stay home, stay healthy' message."

According to the Union, 60% of DHHS employees are still reporting to work, and are required to do so with no explanation. A spokeswoman for DHHS said that there are many things to consider when allowing employees to work from home, citing computer network capability as a focal issue. Gov. Ricketts did not immediately respond to the letter.

### Governor Update

Gov. Ricketts began his daily press conference by announcing he was signing a proclamation, '21 Days to Stay Home and Stay Healthy.' Gov. Ricketts said the proclamation is to encourage Nebraskans to continue and double down their efforts to slow the virus. Included in the proclamation: stay home, socially distance at home and work, shop alone and only once a week, help kids keep a distance, help older Nebraskans, and exercise. Gov. Ricketts clarified that this is not a stay-at-home order but rather a way to ask Nebraskans to exercise their freedom to do the right thing. "The idea here is that if everyone stays home for the next 21 days, we should really knock this virus down," Ricketts said. "But we can't let up."

### Directed Health Measure

Gov. Ricketts issued a new DHM on Thursday. This DHM will close salons, tattoo parlors, and gentleman's clubs or bottle clubs statewide. The DHM also prohibits team sports until May 31.

### Testing

The Nebraska National Guard will be setting up testing sites in Kimball and Scottsbluff and begin testing Friday. The Nebraska National Guard is wrapping up its third and final day of testing in Grand Island, which is currently seeing a surge in cases related to a meatpacking facility in the city.

## State Agencies

Chief Human Resource Officer Jason Jackson reported that 30% of state employees are currently working from home. Jackson said state agencies began working March 1 to adjust operations in preparation of COVID-19, while still functionally operation and keeping workers safe. Jackson said efforts are ongoing. This week the state received 250 laptops, and 750 more should arrive next week. Gov. Ricketts added that the services the state agencies provide are considered essential, and that we must continue to provide services through the pandemic.

## *Federal:*

### Lending

On Thursday, the Federal Reserve announced that it is creating a Municipal Liquidity Facility with up to \$500 billion in credit protection in order to “help state and local governments manage cash flow stresses caused by the coronavirus pandemic.”<sup>1</sup> Through the program, the Federal Reserve will buy short-term debt from states and Washington D.C., as well as counties with at least 2 million people or cities with a population of 1 million or higher. Other actions the Federal Reserve is taking:

- Supplying financing to banks taking part in the Small Business Administration’s Paycheck Protection Program
- Boosting the Main Street Lending Program for small businesses with an additional \$600 billion in loans, plus \$75 billion in funding from the Treasury Department (from the CARES Act)
- Expanding three pre-existing loan facilities for consumers and businesses with \$850 billion more in credit, plus backed by \$85 billion in credit protection from the Treasury Department

### Congress

On Thursday, Senate Democrats blocked an additional \$250 billion in funding for small business loans being proposed by Congressional Republicans as well as the White House.<sup>2</sup> Democrats agree with the increase in funding but would like to see half of the funds go to “community-based financial institutions.”

"One of the concerns that we have about the original \$350 (billion) is a lot of money [is] first come, first serve, and many unbanked people who are underbanked or unserved on that basis don't have banking relationships in a way that others do," Pelosi said. "So we said for the next \$250 (billion), we really need to have a percentage of that — \$60 billion — that would go to something called the community development of financial institutions." After democrats offered an amendment to add \$100 billion for hospitals, as well as \$150 billion for state and local governments, Republicans blocked the effort.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/09/economy/federal-reserve-stimulus-states-cities/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/04/09/830733212/senate-democrats-block-gop-effort-to-boost-small-business-aid?utm\\_medium=RSS&utm\\_campaign=nprblogscoronavirusliveupdates](https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/04/09/830733212/senate-democrats-block-gop-effort-to-boost-small-business-aid?utm_medium=RSS&utm_campaign=nprblogscoronavirusliveupdates)