



April 9, 2020

Update on Macon County Operations in response to COVID-19 pandemic

Please find below an update regarding Macon County operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to a tremendous effort by Macon County employees across the board, we are able to continue providing much-needed public services in a safe, effective manner. For accurate and up to date information concerning the COVID-19 situation in Macon County, please visit the Macon County Public Health Facebook Page or the Macon County Website at www.maconnc.org.

Macon County Department of Social Services

- Service provision continues as normal, with steps being taken by the department to better allow for social distancing among staff members and limited face-to-face interaction with public:
 - Lobby is closed to public
 - Applications for services available for pick up and return in the foyer area, M-F 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
 - Information containing numerous ways to contact DSS staff is posted in foyer area
 - Notification system has been placed in the foyer area in the event face to face interaction with DSS staff is required
 - Department of Social Services will become lead agency for Unmet Needs Committee, established in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic
 - Staff divided into building essential/essential
 - Building essential- 8 team leader positions and approximately 17 other positions within the department, who remain at the building to assist those essential employees working from home and assist with face to face interaction as needed
 - Essential employees- Approximately 25 positions who are essential to the business of the organization and can work from home. These employees have entered a temporary telework agreement with Macon County, enabling them to perform daily work from a home workstation

Senior Services

- Macon County Senior Services building at 108 Wayah Street remains closed until further notice
 - Home delivered meal program continues, with the assistance of Macon County Transit
 - Congregate meals served on a drive through/delivery basis, @ approximately 70 meals per day
 - 8:00 am.-12:00 pm daily – Senior Services staff prepares for drive through lunch service
 - 1:00 pm.-5:00 pm daily- Senior Services staff, in cooperation with Macon County Emergency Services and Macon County Public Health operates a call center for the COVID-19 Response (828) 349-2068

Macon County Public Health

- Non-essential services provided by Macon County Public Health remain limited until further notice, allowing all staff to focus directly on COVID-19 response. The following services continue to be provided:
 - Maternal Health, including pregnancy tests and prenatal services
 - Symptomatic STD
 - Communicable Disease and TB
 - Family Planning (problem visits only)
 - Primary Care (sick visits only)
 - All Children vaccinations
 - Adult vaccinations (flu and pneumonia only)
 - Adult Dental (emergency only)
 - Child Dental (emergency only)
 - WIC Program has waived physical presence requirement to ensure no interruption in benefits.
 - Lab (appointment only)
 - Environmental Health
 - Employee Health Clinic

Animal Control

- Services continue being provided on a normal basis
- Officers equipped with personal protection equipment

Sheriff's Department

- Services provided by the Macon County Sheriff's Department continue as normal, with steps being taken by the Sheriff to protect both the community and his officers:
 - A team of officers has been designated specifically for addressing COVID-19 related complaints. Upon receiving a complaint, such as a reported failure to "self-quarantine" an officer from the designated team will deliver an information packet to the alleged violator containing all applicable Macon County emergency regulations. Following delivery of the informational packet, if a second complaint is received, the Health Director will be contacted for consideration of a mandatory quarantine order
 - All complaints must be accompanied by name and contact information to be considered valid
 - All officers have been outfitted with Personal Protective Equipment
 - Three (3) administrative staff capable of teleworking have been identified, should the Sheriff deem this arrangement necessary
 - All employees working from home are required to sign a temporary telework agreement

Detention Center

- Services at the Macon County Detention Center have been adjusted to ensure the safety of staff as well as inmates housed in the Macon County Detention Center
 - Finger printing is available Monday-Friday by appointment only
 - Access to the Detention Center has been limited to attorneys and judicial officials, by appointment only
 - Visitation, which was previously limited to Saturday and Sunday, now expanded to 5 days per week through video conferencing. Facilities for video conferencing have been set up outside the Macon County Detention Center. Video conference visitation is by appointment only
 - All inmates coming into the Macon County Detention Center undergo a health screening process, prior to entering the facility. Any inmates exhibiting COVID-19 related symptoms during the health screening process are to be placed in isolation

Emergency Management/ EMS

- Emergency Management continues to focus on coordinating Macon County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Operational stakeholders in Macon County's COVID-19 response effort communicate weekly through a virtual Emergency Operations Center, via conference call. Stakeholders include: Macon County, Town of Franklin, Town of Highlands, hospitals, school system and CareNet
- Emergency Medical Services continue operating as normal
- Three (3) office/administrative staff are currently working from home or off-site due to potential risks associated with COVID-19
- All employees working from home are required to sign a temporary telework agreement
- Barrett Building (104 East Main Street) closed to public access until further notice
- All Macon County EMS bases remain closed to public access until further notice

Macon County Courthouse Annex Building (5 West Main Street)

Tax Office

- Macon County Tax office continues to operate as normal with steps being taken by the department to better allow for social distancing among staff members and limited face-to-face interaction with the public
 - All office areas behind window at 5 W. Main Street closed to public
 - Tax Collections continues to accept in-person tax payments and documents for approval as a window is in place to prevent direct contact with the public
 - Tax appraisers must ride separately when visiting properties
 - Re-positioned staff in office to adhere to social distancing requirements
 - Primary interoffice communication between staff members conducted via email and telephone
 - Daily temperature reading of all staff required prior to entering office
 - Ten (10) staff (including mapping department) have been identified as being able to telework if needed. Information Technology is currently outfitting ten (10) devices for tax office teleworking
 - During the week of April 6th the Tax Office will begin implementing telework, starting with two (2) staff members
 - All employees working from home will be required to sign a temporary telework agreement
 - Board of Equalization and Review hearings postponed until social distancing and stay at home requirements are lifted
 - Delinquent tax advertisement has been postponed until May

Mapping

- Macon County Mapping Department continues to operate as normal with steps being taken to better allow for social distancing among staff members and limited face-to-face interaction with the public
 - All office areas behind window closed to the public.
 - Mapping continues to accept maps, deeds, etc. in person, as a window is in place to prevent direct contact with public
 - Daily temperature reading of all staff required prior to entering office
 - Workers adhering to social distancing requirements while in office

Administration, Human Resources, Finance

- Macon County Administration, Human Resources and Finance continue to operate as normal, with steps being taken in each department to better allow for social distancing among staff members and limited face-to-face interaction with the public
 - All office areas at 5 W. Main Street closed to public and employee meetings are by appointment only
 - All FY 20-21' Budget meetings are being conducted via conference call
 - Daily temperature reading of all staff required prior to entering office

- Seven (7) staff (2 HR, 4 Finance, 1 Admin) have been identified as being able to telework if needed. Information Technology is currently outfitting ten (10) devices for telework within these departments
- During the week of April 6th the HR department will begin implementing telework, starting with one (1) staff member
- All employees working from home will be required to sign a temporary telework agreement

Information Technology

- Macon County Information Technology continues to operate as normal with steps being taken to better allow for social distancing among staff members and limited face-to-face interaction with the public
 - All IT offices are closed to the public and employee meetings are by appointment only
 - Daily temperature reading of all staff required prior to entering office
 - Beginning the week of April 6th(2) Information Technology staff will be working remotely
 - Information Technology is currently assisting all county departments with telework implementation. Approximately thirty-five (35) computer workstations are being set up for deployment at this time
 - Licenses are being procured which will enable all county Mitel phones to operate from employees home network connections if needed
 - Alternatively, employees working from home can have their Mitel office phones “twinned” to their personal or home phone. At this time, thirteen (13) Mitel office phones have been “twinned” and approximately thirty-five (35) are in line for configuration

Register of Deeds

- Macon County Register of Deeds continues to operate as normal with steps being taken to better allow for social distancing among staff members and limited face-to-face interaction with the public
 - Office entry/exit points have been reduced to one (1)
 - All office areas behind single point of entry are closed to the public
 - Top of door at single entry point removed allowing public to communicate with staff while adhering to social distancing requirements
 - Staff equipped with personal protective equipment
 - Staff are required to adhere to social distancing requirements at all times
 - All marriage licenses issued by appointment only
 - All notary oaths issued by appointment only
 - All vital record requests to be made through mail or on-line
 - On-line document viewing is encouraged
 - Sign-in is required for vault access, with no more than two individuals being allowed in at once

Board of Elections

- Macon County Board of Elections continues to operate as normal with steps being taken to better allow for social distancing among staff members and limited face-to-face interaction with the public
 - Second Primary has been postponed until June 23rd
 - No new voter registration is permitted to occur between the first and second primary
 - General public traffic to Board of Elections Office is minimal
 - One staff member is present in office during normal business hours
 - Full time staff not in the office during business hours are using compensatory time which they have previously accrued for leave
 - One staff member (Director) will be equipped to telework via a computer workstation and “twinning” of office phone to mobile phone
 - All employees working from home are required to sign a temporary telework agreement

Transit

- Macon County Transit continues providing critical transportation services to Macon County residents and visitors
 - Daily ridership is down from approximately 150 trips to approximately 40 trips
 - As a result of decline in daily ridership, MCT is no longer using part-time employees
 - Transit Office is closed to public
 - Transit administrative staff adhering to social distancing requirements within office
 - Transportation to and from work is currently being provided
 - Transportation to AT Hikers exiting the trail is currently being provided
 - Transportation to and from Medical Appointments and Dialysis is currently being provided
 - Assisting Macon County Senior Services with meal delivery
 - Drivers are equipped with personal protection equipment
 - Out of town trips have been limited
 - Limiting number of riders per vehicle to adhere to social distancing guidelines
 - Signage placed in transit vehicles promoting social distancing
 - Busses are sanitized multiple times daily including at the end of each shift
 - Temperature reading for administrative staff and drivers performed at beginning and end of each shift

Building Inspections

- Macon County Building Inspections continues to operate as normal with steps being taken to better allow for social distancing among staff members and limited face-to-face interaction with the public
 - Enhanced protection measures have been installed separating clerical staff from public at office
 - Inspectors can refuse to perform inspections if they determine the safe environment of the job-site has been compromised

- Inspectors and office staff adhering to social distancing guidelines in office and on job sites
- Inspectors and office staff have been provided with personal protection equipment
- Inspectors can perform certain inspections remotely using live remote (LR) technology under guidance issued from the North Carolina Department of Insurance
- One staff member (Director) of Planning Permitting and Development currently teleworking
- All employees working from home are required to sign a temporary telework agreement

Solid Waste/Convenience Centers

- Macon County Solid Waste continues to operate as normal
 - All employees are required to wear rubber gloves underneath work-gloves
 - All employees have been instructed to “limit contact” with customers as much as possible
 - Employees required to sanitize equipment and work areas at the end of each day
 - Employees are required to spray disinfectant on recyclables prior to handling
 - Customers encouraged to use solid waste facilities and convenience centers responsibly

Housing

- Housing services suspended until further notice
 - Director and administrative assistant currently teleworking
 - Housing workers reporting to office are currently fulfilling training requirements and performing shop-work
 - Housing workers are compensated through Weatherization Assistance Program funds
 - Housing administrative assistant compensated through grant funds
 - WAP (Weatherization Assistance Program) and grant funding is felt to be sufficient for compensating housing employees through the remainder of the fiscal year
 - All employees working from home are required to sign a temporary telework agreement

Soil and Water

- Macon County Soil and Water continues to operate as normal with steps being taken to better allow for social distancing among staff members and limited face-to-face interaction with the public
 - Signage in place encouraging customers to call ahead in order to minimize building occupants
 - Social distancing measures adhered to by staff in office as well as on site visits

Cooperative Extension

- Macon County Cooperative Extension continues to operate as normal with steps being taken to better allow for social distancing among staff members and limited face-to-face interaction with the public
 - Extension Director and one Agent are present in office during business hours.

- Four extension employees are currently teleworking through the North Carolina State University System
- All visitors to the Cooperative Extension Office must sign in prior to entering office
- Social distancing measures adhered to by office staff
- 4-H Activities are being conducted virtually
- Horticultural education sessions being conducted virtually
- All employees working from home are required to sign a temporary telework agreement

Recreation

- Robert C. Carpenter Building remains closed until further notice
- Playground facilities closed to public until further notice
- Restroom facilities at Parker Meadows and Greenway locations remain open in an effort to provide sanitation areas for those visiting the park facilities
- Social distancing signage placed at all high traffic outdoor recreation areas
- Recreation employees directed to focus on building and grounds maintenance as this is essential to the continuity of operations of Macon County Government

Building and Grounds

- Building and Grounds continues to focus primarily on enhanced sanitation efforts at all Macon County Facilities
- All employees have been equipped with personal protection equipment, and required to adhere to social distancing guidelines
- Two month supply of cleaning and sanitation supplies currently on hand

Garage

- Emergency Services and Law Enforcement vehicles remain top priority
- Pre ordered two month supply of tires, brake pads and other needed supplies for emergency services and law enforcement vehicles to ensure continuity of service
- All employees are required to adhere to social distancing guidelines