

MONTEREY COUNTY
2020 CSAC Challenge Award Entry
Issue Area: Disaster/Emergency Response & Management
Population: Suburban County Category

Monterey County – Human Resources Response to COVID-19 – Cooperation Can Save Lives

OVERVIEW: The County of Monterey Human Resources Department quickly developed innovative resources for County leaders, employees, and the public in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

CHALLENGE: As a result of COVID-19, the County of Monterey faced challenges with safeguarding employees while continuing to provide quality services. The County’s workforce is especially critical as our County hospital is the only trauma center in the tri-county area, we serve a large agricultural community and our County’s sizable geographic expanse with rural areas lacking many services. As COVID-19 cases increased throughout the County and our workforce was further impacted, the need for the Human Resources Department (HRD) to create agile, flexible, and creative tools became apparent.

SOLUTION: HRD demonstrated innovation and adaptability in addressing the changing needs of our workforce. The many resources created by HRD, were intended to promote safety and support the health of both County employees and members of the public when accessing County services. These resources include the HR Emergency Response Manual with safety protocols and procedures; departmental templates for establishing OSHA-required worksite plans; on-line COVID-19 Safety in the Workplace Training; custom COVID-19 safety posters; Temperature Check Stations, Symptom Screening, and screening verification wristbands at County facilities for both employees and members of the public; Telework During COVID-19 training; Telework and Stress Management and Resilience online learning portals comprised of free resources produced by credible experts. Furthermore, HRD collaborated with the IT, Health and County Counsel departments to internally develop an employee Symptom Self-Screening application and a COVID-19 Workplace Exposure Reporting Tool.

The employee Symptom Self-Screening app was designed to leverage the information found in the County’s Human Resources Management (HRM) system and Microsoft Outlook to enable employees to complete the electronic self-screening assessment prior to arriving to the worksite. This app is available for free download in the Apple App Store and Google Play. The app walks employees through symptom

related questions and either clears them to report to work or sends a notice if the employee is not cleared to report to work. Departments also can view symptom screening completion statistics.

In addition, the newly created Workplace Exposure Reporting tool was also designed to leverage information from our HRM system to help HR professionals obtain important workplace exposure information from impacted employees for secure electronic submission to HRD. The reporting tool provides HRD and Countywide departments a secure platform to communicate and coordinate an appropriate response to workplace exposures and safeguard employees throughout our worksites.

INNOVATION: Due to the unexpected and critical nature of the COVID-19 emergency, many agencies were compelled to pay third-party vendors to develop technological tools to aid in the safeguarding of worksites. The County of Monterey took a unique approach in leveraging available internal resources to create custom technological tools, saving tens of thousands of dollars.

RESULTS: The various tools and resources HRD launched to respond to COVID-19 helps ensure the safety and well-being of all County employees. County employees reporting to worksites submit their daily symptom assessments using the County's Self-Screening Assessment app. In a recent Coping with COVID-19 Survey, 80% of respondents feel positive about working from home. The Telework training and tools developed by HRD supports the County's workforce who is working from home. A total of 86% of respondents agree that they have the tools and technology to be productive at home. Overall, 73% of respondents agree that the County has done a good job adapting to the necessary work changes.

REPLICABILITY: The concepts of the policies, procedures, trainings, and technological tools created by HRD, can be easily replicated by agencies interested in implementing similar resources. When implementing, agencies would need to work with internal subject matter experts to tailor each tool to meet the specific needs of their agency. Based on the feedback received both internally and externally, the County HR's COVID-19 response can be promoted as best practices.

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OPTIONAL SUBMISSION: Video: [County of Monterey Human Resources Department – Cooperation Can Save Lives](#); Website: [Monterey County Human Resources Department](#)