

Update about the coronavirus



Sending Office: Committee on House Administration
Sent By: Daniel.Taylor@mail.house.gov

Dear Colleague:

As we have previously shared with the House community, the Committee on House Administration (CHA) has consulted with the [Office of the Attending Physician \(OAP\)](#) about the coronavirus, as well as with other officers and departments, including the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), [Chief Administrative Officer \(CAO\)](#), [Sergeant at Arms \(SAA\)](#), and U.S. Capitol Police. We remain in close and regular contact with all of those offices. We want to take this opportunity to provide you and your staff with additional information about steps CHA has taken in coordination with these partners. All of these measures will help House offices improve their emergency preparedness in general and we urge offices to take advantage of the types of assistance highlighted below.

Telework equipment purchases. In light of the unique and unusual circumstances presented by the coronavirus, as well as to promote House office emergency preparedness in general, CHA has determined that it is appropriate to permit Member offices to be able to access any remaining unspent LY 2019 funds to purchase teleworking equipment and supplies (e.g. laptop and tablet computers, cell phones, etc.). Offices may continue to use LY 2020 funds for this purpose, too.

As we have previously noted, the SAA has provided offices with information about continuity of operations planning. COOP plans generally allow offices to consider the actions and resources needed to continue to operate in the event of an emergency. A COOP plan may include provisions for House staff to work remotely, such as by telework. It is prudent for all House offices to have appropriate emergency and COOP plans in place. We note that adopting such plans and purchasing suitable equipment to permit telework is a safeguard and investment that will protect offices in the future, including from situations where offices may need to be closed because of natural disasters (e.g. hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.) or other circumstances.

Technical assistance with telework equipment. Beginning Monday, March 9, the CAO will establish a House Telework Readiness Center. This will provide the opportunity for staff to receive technical assistance they may need to be prepared to work remotely. Experts from House Information Resources and various information technology vendors who serve the House will be available in the Rayburn Cafeteria seating area beginning at 12:00 p.m. to help staff assess their equipment and other technical needs to be prepared to work from a remote location. For example, staff may bring House-issued laptops for system checks to ensure they have the necessary telework software. Training will also be provided on how to

remotely connect and access your office data and resources. After the initial Monday opening, the Readiness Center will be open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Laptops that are regularly (at least once per month) powered up and connected to the House should not need extensive updating. However, a device that has been unused for some time may require more significant updates. After the Center opens on Monday, if you have a laptop that you anticipate will require extensive updating, please drop it off before 10:00 a.m. and it should be ready for pickup by 3:00 p.m. the following day.

Staff in district offices who may have technical questions about telework are encouraged to contact the Technology Service Desk at (202) 225-6002 or (800) 447-8737 for Telework Readiness Support.

Telework/telecommuting. As noted above and in CHA's previous communications, employees of an office that implements a previously established COOP plan may telework during the period that the COOP plan is in effect. The equipment an office purchases to provide for telework in an emergency scenario may also be used for telecommuting in the ordinary course of business.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have further questions, please contact CHA at (202) 225-2061 (majority) or (202) 225-8281 (minority).

Sincerely,

Zoe Lofgren Rodney Davis

Chairperson Ranking Member