




STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 9, 2020

TO: All Commissioners
Administrative Services Directors

FROM: Ben Stevens
Chief of Staff 

SUBJECT: Out-of-State Travel Restriction and Hiring Freeze

With the recent volatility in the global oil markets and the impacts on our State's financial resources, prudent management actions must be taken to control spending.

This memorandum announces the immediate suspension of out-of-state travel for ALL employees and an immediate hiring freeze to reduce the impact on state general funds. This hiring freeze applies to all positions, except for those that are necessary to protect the health and safety of Alaskans. Departments may request a waiver from the hiring freeze due to extraordinary circumstances. That process is outlined below.

The Out-of-State Travel suspension applies to ALL state employees, effective today. Employees currently out on approved travel shall return under their prior-approved travel schedules. The hiring freeze applies to:

- All full-time, part-time, non-permanent, and seasonal positions in bargaining units and in the partially-exempt and exempt service paid for by general funds and other state funds.
- Requests to establish new non-permanent positions.
- Requests to extend non-permanent positions.
- Positions that provide administrative support and maintenance in 24-hour facilities.
- Positions partially funded by federal funds.

The hiring freeze does not apply to:

- Positions essential to protect Alaska citizens. This category includes Alaska State Troopers, corrections and probation officers, airport police and fire officers, airport screening officers, and employees that provide patient, resident services, and food service at 24-hour institutions. The following are considered 24-hour institutions:

- Correctional Facilities
 - Juvenile Justice Facilities
 - Alaska Military Youth Academy
 - Pioneer Homes
 - Alaska Psychiatric Institute
 - AVTEC
 - Mt. Edgecumbe High School
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- Positions for which an offer of employment was made prior to March 9, 2020.
 - Lateral transfers and promotions within the same department.
 - Range changes in flexibly ranged positions.
 - Reclassifications within the same job family.
 - Employees delegated the authority to perform the duties of a vacant position that is assigned a higher pay range if bargaining unit provisions or regulations provide for compensation.
 - The use of on-call non-permanent employees, if only used to perform work essential to protect the public's safety or meet other essential state responsibilities.
 - Positions fully funded by federal funds. The Division of Personnel must be sent funding verification from the Commissioner of the requesting department for any new job posting for a position that is 100 percent federally funded.

The following agencies are strongly encouraged to implement the out-of-state travel restrictions and hiring freeze as described in this memo:

- Alaska Aerospace Development Corporation,
- Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education,
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation,
- Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority,
- Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission,
- Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission
- Permanent Fund Corporation
- Regulatory Commission of Alaska.

Recruitments currently on Workplace Alaska will be open through the stated closing date. A notice to all applicants will be posted on Workplace Alaska advising applicants of the hiring freeze and stating that only positions necessary to protect the health and safety of Alaskans, and to meet other essential state responsibilities, will be filled. A currently posted recruitment will not be extended unless a waiver has been approved.

Positions providing direct patient or resident services (including food services) or that are essential in protecting Alaska citizens, but not employed in a 24-hour institution or in one of the exempt job classifications listed above ARE subject to the hiring freeze, but a waiver may be requested.

If a department believes filling a position is necessary to protect the safety of the public, or meet other essential state responsibilities, a request for waiver from the hiring freeze must be submitted to OMB. The waiver request must be submitted in a memorandum addressed to the Chief of Staff and approved by the department's Commissioner. The memorandum must include the following information:

Memorandum-Travel Restrictions and Hiring Freeze

March 9, 2020

Page 3 of 3

- position title, range, PCN, annual personal services cost, and fund source (if CIP Receipts, identify the source of the CIP Receipts);
- the essential results that the person will be responsible for delivering;
- the extraordinary circumstances that contribute to why a waiver should be approved; and
- how long the position has been vacant.

When a waiver is approved, the department is responsible for providing a copy of it to its HR Manager in the Division of Personnel.

On behalf of the Governor, please accept his thanks for your cooperation in meeting this challenge.