

Executive Order No 2025-4

CONFIRMING END OF COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY IN DEKALB COUNTY AND TRANSITIONING TO A POST-EMERGENCY WORK PLAN FOR COUNTY OFFICES AND EMPLOYEES

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 13(a) of DeKalb County, Georgia’s Organizational Act, the Chief Executive Officer has exclusive power to supervise, direct and control the administration of DeKalb County’s government; and

WHEREAS, a state of emergency was declared in DeKalb County and in the State of Georgia due to the COVID-19 pandemic (“Pandemic”) in March 2020; and

WHEREAS, a state of emergency due to COVID-19 is no longer necessary in 2025; and

WHEREAS, during the Pandemic, numerous DeKalb County employees whose duties could be performed remotely were required or permitted to work remotely, rather than working in the office;

WHEREAS, since the Pandemic, some DeKalb County offices have continued to be staffed, at times, only by employees working remotely; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, having in-person staffing in all County offices during business hours will benefit the efficiency of providing County services, and will not present a danger to public health; and

WHEREAS, some remote work continues to be beneficial to employees, beneficial to the management of limited office space and parking, and not detrimental to the efficient provision of County services;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Chief Executive Officer hereby issues the following Executive Order:

1. **Confirmation of end to COVID-19 state of emergency.** By this Executive Order, the Chief Executive Officer confirms that the state of emergency previously declared in DeKalb County because of the COVID-19 pandemic has ended.
2. **Wearing of face masks is permitted but not required.** Employees shall be permitted to wear face masks when needed or appropriate to reduce the spread of contagious illness. However, absent a new public health emergency, DeKalb County Code Section 18-162(a) will no longer be enforced to require the wearing of masks generally. The Chief Executive Officer encourages the Board of Commissioners to repeal DeKalb County Code Sections 18-160 through 18-165 regarding mask requirements, due to the end of the COVID-19 state of emergency.
3. **In-person staffing of DeKalb County offices during County business hours.** Beginning no later than **June 2, 2025**, the director of each department and office under the chain of command of the Chief Executive Officer is directed to make sure that each County office under that department director's supervision is staffed Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (or during the business hours of that office, if different) by a sufficient number of employees working in-person at the office to ensure that an employee is routinely available to greet and handle inquiries from persons visiting the office in-person during those business hours.
4. **Intent to increase in-person staffing.** Paragraph 3 above is intended to increase in-person staffing of County offices--it is not intended to authorize the reduction of staffing or of existing business hours in any County office.

5. **Terms and conditions of authorized remote work.** Any department director under the supervision of the Executive Assistant/Chief Operating Officer (“COO”) may submit to the COO a written plan to authorize remote work for eligible employees in specified job positions in the department director’s department; the COO may approve or approve with modifications such a plan. However, all remote work for employees under the chain of command of the Chief Executive Officer will be subject to the following terms and conditions:

- a. **Definition of remote work.** For purposes of this executive order, to “work remotely” means to work at the employee’s residence or at another location of the employee’s choice that is not a County office or another work location that is chosen solely based on the requirements of an employee’s job duties. For example, an employee who goes to a County contractor’s office to meet with the County contractor, or who goes to a County construction site to monitor work being done by a contractor, is not working remotely. However, an employee who works at a friend or relative’s home, or works at a hotel (other than when engaged in approved business travel) is working remotely.
- b. **General limitations on remote work.** In general, no employee will be permitted to work at home or remotely on a full-time basis, and no employee will be excused from working at the office or at other locations when necessary to complete the employee’s job duties. Any exceptions to the foregoing rule in departments supervised by the COO must be approved in advance and in writing by the COO.¹ In

¹ If an employee whose essential job functions can be performed from a remote location requests remote work as a reasonable accommodation for a disability under the Americans with

general, at least 60% of an employee's work hours must be spent working in the office or in a work location assigned or approved by the employee's department director that is not the employee's residence.

c. **Jobs that cannot be performed effectively from a remote location.**

No employee will be permitted to work remotely whose job duties cannot be performed effectively from a remote location.² The determination whether the duties of an employee's job position can be performed effectively from a remote location will be made by the employee's department director, subject to approval by the COO.

d. **Restriction on remote work by new employees.** Any employee who begins work for DeKalb County on or after **June 2, 2025** shall be required to work at the office until the orientation and training period designated by the employee's department director is completed.

e. **Remote work for contagious illnesses.** A department director may authorize remote work on an occasional basis for an employee who is believed to have a contagious illness but who feels well enough to work and who requests to work remotely rather than using sick leave.

f. **Permission required for remote work locations other than employee's residence.** An employee who seeks to work remotely

Disabilities Act, such a request may be approved by the employee's department director after consultation with an appropriate representative of the Human Resources and Merit System Department, following an interactive process to determine whether reasonable accommodations other than remote work would be appropriate and lawful under the circumstances.

² During the Pandemic, the duties of certain job positions were adjusted for public health reasons, to temporarily alter or eliminate essential job functions that required certain categories of employees to work in the office or in other group settings. However, such temporary elimination or adjustment of essential job functions is no longer necessary or appropriate; these adjustments ended some time ago in most departments; and they will not be allowed in the future.

from a location other than the employee's residence address of record shall be required to obtain prior written permission from the employee's department director or the department director's designee.

- g. **Requirement of signed remote work agreement.** Before any employee will be authorized to begin or to continue remote work after **June 2, 2025**, that employee shall be required to sign a remote work agreement ~~in substantially the form of the attached agreement~~, as modified by the department director for the specific needs of the department. **All modified agreements are subject to the approval of the COO.**
- h. **Remote work is a privilege.** Remote work is a privilege, not a right for any employee. A department director or the COO may require employees under their supervision to work 100% of their work hours in the office if the department director or COO deems this necessary to accomplish the mission and goals of the department or office. After **June 2, 2025**, no department director under the supervision of the COO may permit employees to work remotely unless the department director's remote work plan for the department has been approved in writing by the COO. Remote work privileges may be revoked if an employee's performance is not satisfactory, if the employee is not regularly reachable by the employee's supervisor(s) on remote work days, or if the department director otherwise determines that the employee requires in-person supervision. Failure or refusal to work at the office or in other work locations when required, or any other abuse of remote work privileges, may result in revocation of an employee's remote work privileges and/or in disciplinary action where appropriate.

6. **Office space and parking concerns.** If the terms of this executive order that require increased work in the office will result in a department having insufficient office space or parking for employees to work in the office on the required number of days, this concern shall be discussed with the COO within five business days after this executive order is issued or promptly after the concern arises.
7. **Prohibition on discrimination and retaliation.** With regard to the administration of remote work privileges, the County will not discriminate on the basis of any category protected by law or retaliate against any employee for making a good faith complaint of such discrimination.
8. **Policies in this order are subject to change.** This executive order is subject to change at any time at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer. Remote work privileges as described under this executive order may be changed or revoked at any time, without notice, for any lawful reason.

SO ORDERED this ___ day of **May**, 2025.

Lorraine Cochran-Johnson
Chief Executive Officer
DeKalb County, Georgia

ATTEST:

Barbara H. Sanders-Norwood, CCC
Clerk to the Chief Executive Officer and
Board of Commissioners

APPROVED AS TO FORM: APPROVED AS TO SUBSTANCE:

Matthew C. Welch
Interim County Attorney

Zachary L. Williams
Executive Assistant/Chief Operating Officer