

March 26, 2020

Dear Partners in the EAP/WAP Network,

This letter serves to provide further definition for Minnesota Low-Income Weatherization and Energy Assistance Providers, under contract with the MN Department of Commerce and their subcontractors, regarding Governor Tim Walz' **Executive Order 20-20: Directing Minnesotans to Stay at Home** beginning on Friday, March 27, 2020, at 11:59 pm through Friday, April 10, 2020, at 5:00 pm. A few points from that order guides my decisions regarding the essential nature of your work:

On March 23, 2020, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community and National Resilience in COVID-19 Response. The CISA Guidance identifies workers who conduct a range of operations and services that are essential to continued critical infrastructure viability. This federal guidance provides a baseline for Minnesota's efforts to ensure critical infrastructure and services are maintained while slowing the spread of COVID-19.

Section 3: This Executive Order does not restrict virtual work or telework (i.e. work from home), and Minnesotans working in any field are encouraged to work from their home or residence as much as possible.

Section 4: Definitions. As used in this Executive Order, "workers" and "personnel" are broadly defined to include employees, contractors, vendors, and volunteers. As used in this Executive Order, "Critical Sectors" is defined to include the categories found in the CISA Guidance and the additional categories listed below.

*Section 6: **Exemptions – Critical Sectors. All workers who can work from home must do so.** Workers in the following Critical Sectors, who are performing work that cannot be done at their home or residence through telework or virtual work and can be done only at a place of work outside of their home or residence, are exempted from the prohibition in paragraph 1 as set forth below. These critical services exemptions apply only to travel to and from an individual's home or residence and place of work and an individual's performance of work duties that cannot be done at their homes or residence.*

i. Other community-based government operations and essential functions.

ii. Housing, shelter, and homelessness-prevention staff of state and local agencies and organizations responsible for ensuring safe and stable housing, including workers from state and local agencies and organizations with responsibility for ensuring safe and stable housing; shelter outreach or drop-in center programs; financing affordable housing; and administering rent subsidies, homeless interventions, operating supports, and similar supports. This includes workers necessary to provide repairs, maintenance, and operations support to residential dwellings.

bb. Charitable and social services organizations.

This category is limited to workers supporting organizations that are engaged in hunger relief work, and those that provide food, shelter, prescription delivery, mental health and substance abuse treatments, and other social services, as well as other necessities of life for individuals in need of such services, older adults who live alone, people with disabilities, and those who need assistance as a result of this emergency.

The [CISA Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce](#) identifies the following categories of essential workers:

- Workers who support food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals
- Workers to ensure continuity of building functions

Based on this guidance, those who cannot work from home, and are necessary to provide the functions listed below, on behalf of the MN Energy Assistance Program and the MN Weatherization Assistance Program, are deemed essential workers.

To the extent possible, provide these essential functions while working from home. For that which cannot be provided remotely, Service Providers are exempt from Executive Order 20-20 for the following energy assistance and weatherization assistance services:

- Accepting and processing energy assistance applications;
- Crisis assistance;
- Assistance to alleviate no-heat situations;
- Assistance to mitigate any situations that may pose an immediate health and safety hazard to the occupant; and
- Any administrative functions necessary to support the above assistance

Please read all of the guidance attached to ensure that you follow the executive order. You may direct specific questions regarding the order to the respective program managers listed below. These individuals, or their supervisors, will provide additional programmatic direction, as needed.

- EAP Director Michael Schmitz: Michael.Schmitz@state.mn.us
- WAP Supervisor Jake McAlpine: Jake.McAlpine@state.mn.us

Sincerely,



Steve Kelley
Commissioner

cc: Katherine Blauvelt, Minnesota Department of Commerce
Michelle Gransee, Minnesota Department of Commerce
Michael Schmitz, Minnesota Department of Commerce
Jake McAlpine, Minnesota Department of Commerce