



NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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To Ease Financial Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic, Mayor Jenny Durkan Signs Emergency Order to Temporarily Halt Evictions of Small Businesses and Nonprofit Organizations

New Action Is Part of Mayor's Small Business Recovery Package, Builds on Emergency Order Signed on March 14 That Halts Residential Evictions

SEATTLE (March 18, 2020) - To further support small businesses and nonprofits impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Mayor Jenny Durkan signed an [Emergency Order](#) that temporarily halts evictions of small business and nonprofit tenants in the City of Seattle. The order's temporary moratorium on small business and nonprofit tenant evictions is effective immediately for any action related to the non-payment of rent or due to the expiration of the lease's term during the moratorium. It will be in effect for at least 60 days or until the termination of the civil emergency declared in the Proclamation of Civil Emergency dated March 3, 2020. The decision to extend the moratorium will be evaluated and determined by the Mayor based on public health needs.

The new action [builds on the steps announced March 10 in the Mayor's Small Business Recovery Package](#). It also builds on the Mayor's [March 14 order halting residential evictions](#) across Seattle.

"We are facing the challenge of our lifetime. We are taking unprecedented steps to protect both residents and employers from the impact of this crisis. The last several weeks have been devastating for our small businesses, and we know the crisis will be felt for months," said Mayor Durkan. "With this step that builds on our Small Business Recovery Package, we're doing everything we can to help keep small businesses afloat during this unprecedented, difficult time. We will continue to do all we can to support small businesses, workers, and their families. We can't do it without more resources from the state and federal government, including a bold, long-term small business and economic recovery package from Congress."

"This moratorium to provide much needed relief to businesses across Seattle is a high priority for the entire Council," said Councilmember [Lisa Herbold](#) (District 1, West Seattle and South Park). "I appreciate that this commercial eviction moratorium has an equity focus on small businesses. I thank the Mayor's Office for the collaboration with me to ensure the eviction moratorium includes nonprofits, regardless of size. The Council will continue to work on additional legislative actions to support businesses. While there is a long road ahead for businesses to overcome the impacts of coronavirus on the economy, the City is committed to supporting our businesses and their employees now and as they recover."

"This public health crisis has become an economic crisis, especially for our small business community and their employees. Devastated by closures, small businesses and workers who keep our local economy running are hanging on by a thread," said Councilmember [Teresa Mosqueda](#) (Position 8, Citywide). "A moratorium on commercial evictions will ensure small businesses and nonprofits are able to support their employees, maintain businesses, and not worry about being evicted if they fall short on rent as they grapple with the economic impacts of coronavirus. This emergency order protects the health and safety of our community and supports the resiliency of our local businesses and their workers."

The temporary moratorium suspends small business and nonprofit tenant evictions related to the non-payment of rent or due to the expiration of lease term during the moratorium. Independently-owned businesses with 50 employees or fewer per establishment, state nonprofits and 501(c)(3) nonprofits will be eligible. Along with halting evictions, the order also prevents eligible small businesses and nonprofits from incurring late fees, interest, or other charges due to late payment during the moratorium. For tenants who must appear in court, the moratorium should be used as a defense. If a tenant does not appear in court, the court may grant a continuance to allow the matter to be heard at a later date, after the moratorium has lifted. [You can read the full order here.](#)

Over the past week, Mayor Durkan has implemented a series of actions including:

- [Deferring utility payments for customers impacted by COVID-19](#);
- Implementing a [temporary moratorium on residential evictions](#) to provide relief for working people financially impacted by COVID-19;
- Announcing a small business [relief package](#) that included deferred business taxes and a [stabilization fund](#); and
- Creating a new [Arts Recovery Package](#) to provide immediate financial relief to artists and cultural organizations that have been impacted by COVID-19.

In addition, she continues to advocate for a comprehensive small business and worker relief package from Congress to provide immediate and lasting relief to Seattle communities impacted by COVID-19, and the City is working quickly to scale new programs.

The City has created [a comprehensive resource page](#) for residents and small businesses impacted by COVID-19. This page will be updated as more information becomes available.