



CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston IT Services (HITS)

Interoffice

Correspondence

To: Department Directors
Mayor's Office Directors

From: Lisa Kent 
Chief Information Officer / Director

Date: 3/18/2020

Cc: Mayor Sylvester Turner
Mayor's Chief of Staff Marvalette Hunter

Subject: **Remote Work & Technology Tools**

Many departments are actively pursuing options for **greater social distancing** and **remote work**. This correspondence and attachment provide helpful information about technology tools and requirements for accessing them.

- **Remote Work Checklist:** The attached document illustrates the connectivity requirements for commonly used enterprise applications. It is not a comprehensive list – we support hundreds of applications – but the checklist highlights major systems that are heavily used by multiple departments. The checklist will also be posted on the City's Service Now portal (<https://houstontx.service-now.com/esp/>) and will be updated periodically.
- **Office 365:** All City of Houston employees have licenses for Office 365, which is a suite of applications that reside in the cloud and can be accessed over any internet connection. Office 365 includes email (except HPD users), One Drive, Teams, and several other applications. Users can access the Office 365 portal from any internet-connected device. The attached checklist provides links to access the portal itself as well as training materials and security requirements.
- **Microsoft Teams:** Microsoft Teams is a web-conferencing and team collaboration tool that is part of the Office 365 suite and is already in use by many departments.

Teams is will be *very useful* for remote work and virtual meetings with audio, video, and content sharing. It is already available to all City employees either through the desktop or mobile applications, or by logging directly into the O365 web portal. Teams is currently licensed to allow both internal and external users to participate in virtual meetings *via the internet*. HITS and Microsoft are pursuing a temporary upgrade that will further enhance the usability of Teams to *allow external call-in (audio only) users* to join Teams meetings by phone. Some users are already licensed for this, but we are seeking to expand that capability to all users at no additional cost in the next few days.

- **Training:** There are links to how-to videos and training documentation on the Service Now portal. If your departments need additional help beyond that, HITS and Microsoft are conducting multiple web-conferences to help educate City of Houston users. Watch for those announcements or submit a ticket to the HITS IT Service Desk through our Service Now portal to request a train-the-trainer workshop for your department.

I hope these tools will make it easier for your departments to function more effectively in remote work scenarios.