

## From the Director's Desk: In a historic moment, what you can do?

Asked another way, when trust in government weakens, how can we increase the level of trust in each other?

Albert Camus said in *The Plague*, "...what we learn in time of pestilence: that there are more things to admire in men than to despise." For one, we can live admirably.

It foils us that in these crises, there is, perhaps, nothing decisively impactful one person can do to change as vast and structural challenge as economic inequality or injustice today. Many are exercising their First Amendment right to communal free speech by protesting. If you are not the protesting type, you can keep your eyes open, stay informed, speak to your representatives, and vote. For the health crisis, you can adhere to the Five Commitments of personal health responsibility. You can raise trust among humans through these actions:



**Give.** Give what you can, how you can. There are many agencies providing relief and assistance that could use your time or money. If you are fortunate enough to be employed as unemployment reaches 20%, giving rises to a kind of duty. Giving during an unsettled time, when your own economic future is not known will open your humanity to others. The action may be more important than the material support to the recipient. I have increased my donations to news outlets lately because I feel they are such an important lifeline to the pursuit of truth during this historic time. There are charitable organizations in every one of our counties providing direct aid to the less-fortunate; food, shelter, the basics. In public health, we are flattening the upward curve. We also need to flatten the downward curve in the economic crisis for those most vulnerable.

**See people.** I have found that being around people now is overwhelming after having distanced for a few months. The default seems to be avoiding eye contact. Actively acknowledging the people you encounter as fellow human beings is more important than ever, especially those who are doing work that enables us to safely distance. I've said 'thank you' a lot more than usual since March. It is a small thing, and it matters. A little extra friendliness cuts through some of the awkwardness of distancing. Fight to see through the mask.

**Tip Randomly.** I don't suggest this like Rodney Dangerfield throwing bills on the ground to be picked up. Handing out money may sound insignificant or gauche. Try some random, excessive tipping. This is unnatural for me. I am a lifelong cheapskate

who often under-tipped. I despise cafes and pick-up restaurants that prompt 15%, 25% or higher tips on a pay app especially when no actual customer service was provided. I was a barista, I waited tables. During this time, though, I am softening-give and see people-and sometimes add a tip. Last week, I handed \$20 to a guy cleaning porta-potties beside I-70 where I had stopped. A day later I tipped \$20 on a \$15 meal to a worker at Chipotle who handed me my sack lunch at the door. For good measure, I gave \$20 to the garbage man when he came by on Friday. These actions are not going to solve inequality or pay the rent, but a look in the eye, a thank you and a twenty is not nothing either.

**We've entered a time of historic suffering.** On 60 Minutes recently, Fed Chair William Powell spoke of coronavirus hurting "[those least able to bear its burdens](#)" citing that of those earning \$40,000 or less, more than 40 % have been laid off, often women, who make up more than 55% of the 20 plus million Americans who lost a job recently, and the service-sector jobs that make them especially vulnerable. This moment is exposing a lot, hypocrisy, narcissism, selfishness, of course, but also actions to admire. This scope of this crisis means more of us will experience or observe suffering close at hand which inoculates us from the rhetoric of separation and blame. Don't avoid the news. Realize that even if you are insulated, many people are living it. This experience is common and shared, but its impacts are far from equal. How will you find your place in this historic time?

**Recognize this moment we share.** Most of us in our lifetimes have not experienced such widespread suffering so close to home. When the Chair of the Federal Reserve, whose predecessors were better known for obscure economic code language geared to power brokers speaks of "tremendous inequality," the country should take note. Powell encouraged Congress to continue leveraging spending powers to provide relief during this recession "worse than any since WWII," and pledged [in a statement](#) that the Fed would "facilitate more directly the flow of credit to households, businesses, state and local governments... and encourage banks to use their substantial capital... during this difficult time." He went on to say, "As a society, we should do everything we can to provide relief to those who are suffering for the public good." Now that is outspoken. What are you doing to provide relief on a small scale, close to home?



**Acknowledge Injustice and Inequality:**

Anthony Fauci has been the gold standard on trustworthiness for the health crisis. Camus would be impressed. By the end of May, Jerome Powell had risen the same standard on the economic crisis. On the Fauci scale, Powell scored a full 1:1 Fauci last month. As protesters take to the streets in objection to the videotaped police murder of George Floyd following a series of racial injustices, Former Presidents Bush and

Carter each earned a half-Fauci. Trump, who is approaching [20,000 lies](#) while in office according to the Washington Post Fact Checker then threatened to mobilize military force on U.S citizens protesting injustice, shrank into immeasurability on the Fauci scale. When we interact with each other, strive to live higher on the Fauci scale with those around you.

**As for keeping your eyes open:** Last, if you have not yet, take 10 minutes to watch [this video](#) of George Floyd being murdered. It was put together by the New York Times from various cameras. Imagine a country that does not tolerate people in power treating anyone that way. Being against police brutality, or racially motivated violence is a Constitutionally-sound, patriotic, pro-police, position. Police have authority because they uphold the law, not because they can over-power a citizen or a crowd. Likewise,

protesters do not gain their authority by rioting or looting, but when they stand against injustice. Speaking of a full Fauci, the many law enforcement officers marching with protesters understand that.

Take a step toward healing for all of us.

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Executive Director

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### Equality



The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**. This is equal treatment.

### Equity



**Everyone gets the supports they need** (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

### Justice



All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because **the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed**. The systemic barrier has been removed.

# Five Commitments for Containment



## **I will maintain six feet of physical distance from other individuals.**

- Physical distance is one of the most effective prevention measures.
- I will keep this distance from any person who is not from my household.

## **I will wash my hands often and for at least 20 seconds.**

- Hand washing is especially important after visiting public settings and businesses and before eating or touching my face.

## **I will cover my face in public.**

- I will wear a face covering whenever I am outside and may not be able to maintain 6 feet of physical distance from others.
- I will wear a face covering whenever I am in indoor areas open to the general public.
- Face coverings are not a substitute for maintaining physical distance.

## **I will stay home when I am sick.**

- Isolating myself from others, including household members, will help protect them and limit the spread.

## **I will get tested immediately if I have COVID-19 symptoms.**

- Testing early after COVID-19 symptoms develop can provide valuable information to help prevent spreading COVID-19 to other people and to inform public health officials about the extent of disease spread in the community.

**[See NWCCOG Coronavirus Resource Guide here](#)**

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please forward them to this link.*

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## **SPECIAL EDITIONS**

*News is developing as fast as the speed of the spread of the virus. For the next few weeks - hopefully not months -- we'll publish more frequently as needed to get the most current information to our members. If you have information you think should be shared on this newsletter, please send suggested content to [jestavney@nwccog.org](mailto:jestavney@nwccog.org).*

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