



STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

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MEMORANDUM

March 11, 2020

TO: All Cabinet Members

FROM: Laura E. Freed, Director
Department of Administration

SUBJECT: **COVID-19 Planning – Prioritization of VPN Requests & Office 365 as Alternative to VPN**

The Division of Enterprise Information Technology Services (EITS) has received a large number of requests for Virtual Private Network (VPN) connections in recent days due to departments planning for a possible COVID-19 outbreak. The Department of Administration understands that agencies are planning for their employees to work remotely in case state offices need to be closed. Though EITS is ramping up its VPN capacity, at this time EITS does not have the staffing or equipment to add hundreds of VPNs to the network in a short period of time.

For departments that have moved to Office 365, VPNs may not be necessary for as many staff as originally envisioned. If your department has Office 365, and staff have their own desktops or laptops at home, they can log in to office.com and have use of the full Microsoft Office Productivity Suite, including Outlook, Word, and Excel, as well as access to documents saved to One Drive. Staff can also use Teams—within the office.com environment—to collaborate on documents and communicate directly. You may wish to create special teams for your department leadership, division staff, or smaller workgroups within divisions to enable them to continue working effectively regardless of their location. For training on Office 365, go to quickhelp.com.

If your agency has specialized on-premises applications that essential staff need to continue working, VPNs may be necessary. EITS staff will be reaching out to agencies with official VPN requests in the queue to ask that agencies rank those requests within the larger framework of COVID-19 planning. Agencies that have reached out informally to EITS but have not filled out the VPN form for their staff to get into the queue are expected to prioritize the VPN requests for essential positions, as specified in the department's/division's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). Please take into account the functionality of Office 365 when considering how many essential employees will need VPN access. You must also provide your agency's completed COOP(s) to EITS staff to support your request for VPNs.

As EITS staff builds capacity for VPNs in the coming weeks, we will advise all departments and

work through agencies' ranked lists to add VPN users. We appreciate your patience as we all prepare for a possible COVID-19 outbreak that would disrupt normal state business.