



RE: Return to Work/Reopening

Honorable Chair Valadez and Board of Supervisors Villegas, Bronson Christy and Miller:

As the employee representative of Pima County, we have been receiving ongoing concerns regarding the Return to Work protocols and reopenings. While last week significant changes were made, more changes are needed to protect employees. We strongly believe the voice of front line employees is necessary both in developing and implementing departmental plans for reopenings. There is heightened stress and anxiety as employees have been left out of the planning process. There are many reopening solutions and best practices missing from current departmental plans. It is critical that administrative staff survey, discuss and take action to INCLUDE County employees.

We are receiving reports of employees being denied telecommuting or alternative schedules even with medical attestations. It is critical that the County provide a fair and transparent appeals process. Many employees are facing huge challenges and should be afforded timely appeals. Additionally, there are departments without proper cleaning supplies, continued concerns with PPE's and issues with maintaining social distancing guidelines.

We are including one of the many emails, voicemails and conversations we are having with Library department employees. With its numerous branches, there are very special considerations that should have been taken into account with any reopening plans. A gradual reopening with the real input of library employees would help ensure safe and healthy work environments. Further direction and input is urgently needed in regards to the implementation of the currently submitted Library plan. Please read the submitted email excerpt below from a long tenured library employee.

*"I am a librarian currently working at a PCPL branch. I am writing with my strong concerns about library administration's decision to unrealistically expedite branches opening this soon. We all want to be available to the public to fulfil our civic duties to our community members who have been without our much needed services and programs during this pandemic. However, this sudden partial reopening came as a shocking surprise. We had very little time to prepare for a safe opening and we have not been given some of the promised ppe supplies we were promised and that is outlined in Ms. Mathewson's plan. As of Friday evening, we had not received everything that we were promised.*

*Although many employees of the library have masters degrees and are highly capable, we were not allowed to telecommute nor were we given any opportunity to give input as to how we would begin reopening each branch. Many of us, like myself, had been (gratefully) placed in needed*

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*positions in Pima County...delivering supplies, finding places for people experiencing homelessness, helping out the Community Food Bank, working at the downtown Valdez library working Infoline and Ask a Librarian and offering other reference services, including opening new library card accounts so that people could access our electronic services.*

*I received a call from my branch manager in the afternoon of May 7th telling me that she had been instructed to call me back from the position I took and that I was to report back to my home branch on Wednesday, May 13th to prepare for a public opening on that following Monday, May 18th. Some of my coworkers had one week to prepare, some, like myself had a few days, and some...such as the pages who will be checking in all the books and assisting people in the computer labs, will have 2 hours tomorrow, May 18th, to take the needed safety training videos, and learn the new operations that we are now experiencing.*

*I am extremely concerned about the inequity of how some PCPL staff are (and mostly the higher paid staff) working without public contact, and those of us on the "front lines" are put in harm's way with these rushed policies. We have had very little time to put systems in place, such as the mandatory temperature checks, etc. I would like to know the reason for such a rushed attempt to open the library branches.*

*We are not experiencing lower cases of infection. This is a poor decision scientifically/medically speaking."*

*This is one voice of many throughout the library system. Please take action to protect County employees and the public from rushed and poorly implemented plans. Your employees need your continued leadership to protect their health and wellness.*

Thank you,

Maritza J Broce  
AFSCME Local 449

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