



**NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office**

***Lee Harris, Mayor***

Vasco A. Smith, Jr., Administration Building  
11<sup>th</sup> Floor, 160 North Main, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SHELBY COUNTY MAYOR LEE HARRIS ORDERS  
EXTENSIVE LIST OF REFORMS TO PROTECT SHELBY COUNTY INMATES  
FROM RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SPREAD OF COVID-19**

MEMPHIS, TN – Today, Mayor Lee Harris signed an Executive Order to expand protections for inmates in the Shelby County Division of Corrections. The Order requires the Division of Corrections to:

- Cease in-person visitation, and provide remote or video visitation as an alternative in order to maintain contact with family and community; and
- Cease admission of new prisoners from any out-of-county prison or detention facility, unless required by law; and
- Screen all employees, vendors, or other visitors, and refuse entry to employees, vendors, and visitors who present an unreasonably high temperature or other symptom of COVID-19; and
- Provide testing to individuals who exhibit symptoms, and testing opportunities for all; and
- Distribute masks and facial coverings to prisoners and staff every week, and institute policy to grant requests for a replacement if the mask becomes wet or soiled, regardless of an individual's ability to pay; and
- Distribute handwashing and cleaning supplies to maintain personal hygiene, and for the regular cleaning of common areas and surfaces; and
- Provide remote or video access for educational, religious, personal growth, re-entry, or other mentoring programming, such as the program conducted by Hope Church; and
- Make prompt, regular disclosure to the Shelby County Health Department and the public regarding COVID-19 testing and testing results.

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**Ernie Hilliard, Co-Chair of MICAH's Re-entry Subcommittee:** "My fellow MICAH leaders and I are pleased to see Mayor Harris' administration take action to further protect inmates in the Division of Corrections. Our faith calls us to uplift the marginalized and the vulnerable. Our incarcerated brothers and sisters are extremely vulnerable during this pandemic. We believe we must restore and safeguard the humanity that is often stripped from them. The protections outlined in this executive order bring us closer to recognizing the humanity of those that are incarcerated."

**Mayor Lee Harris:** "Around the country, some of the biggest COVID-19 outbreaks have been in jails and prisons. Here in Shelby County, we will take an aggressive approach to protecting the inmates in our care. Among other measures, this Executive Order will ensure that we have clear procedures for regularly distributing masks and personal hygiene supplies to inmates, protocols to help reduce the risk of spread in this unique environment, and a policy for screening everyone who enters our Corrections facilities. These individuals, who may have been previously on the wrong side of the law, still deserve our humanity and compassion. Although they were sentenced to a prison term, they were not sentenced to COVID-19."

Read the Executive Order [here](#).

(end of release)