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March 19, 2020

To all our Community Action Staff:

It has been a very challenging week. Information and guidelines related to the coronavirus pandemic is in constant flux. Both New York State and the Federal government have issued guidelines and mandates (almost daily) with which we are complying. So far, we've heard from our largest funder (Head Start) regarding direction. We expect to hear official communications from most of our other grant funders by sometime next week. Like us, their first focus is on keeping their staff safe as they work to implement their emergency plans so that they can provide necessary direction to us.

The good news? During the week of Monday, March 23, 2020- Friday, March 27th, all staff will receive their regular pay hours for the week, regardless of whether they are working the full amount of their regularly scheduled hours, subject to these additional guidelines:

- 1. All Head Start / Early Head Start / Child Care Partnership staff should receive and follow directions from their Director/Leadership in a separate communication.**
- 2. If you are a CATS transportation, Main Street Store, or CSBG (Emergency Food Services) employee, ask your supervisor/Director when and if you should report to work.** We continue to support clients with these vital services. Based on usage, we may adjust to run with fewer staff, and/ or announce reduced hours & schedules. If you are working you must follow all safety and distancing protocols as directed by your supervisor and enforce that our clients are doing the same. This keeps us all safe!
- 3. Please remember to maintain confidentiality of any staff who are not at work,** we ask you not to spread any innuendo. Idle gossip causes disruption. We ask you not to violate co-worker's personal space- neither the physical 6-foot rule, nor their personal business. If for any reason we need to contact staff who may have had any incidental exposures, we will follow mandated protocol and contact the Health Department.
- 4. Some staff (Fiscal, CCR&R) may be asked to work a hybrid of remote work and reduced / rotating hours on site.** For example, fiscal will continue to process payroll, place orders, and process vendor checks. Email access for staff working remotely who don't have Agency smart phones to access e-mail may be sporadic, so please be patient with the response time.
- 5. Other staff (namely, Weatherization, ACT) may be asked to stay home to reduce the numbers of staff on site in compliance with NYS mandates.**

6. **We are implementing our policy for emergency closing.** We are allowed five days per year, but have already used one. The Executive Committee of the Board has approved a one-time waiver to add a day back for next week. We will apply this provision so that all staff are guaranteed another week of regular pay. By mid-week, we should hopefully receive additional guidance from the rest of our funders. Then we will know whether your grant covers payroll if staff are not working, and if not, your supervisor will then discuss other options with you, including possible furlough (temporary layoff) scenarios. This will be discussed in next week's staff memo.

We are being cautious so that we take every possible action to minimize disruption to employee pay and to insure that employee benefits will not be affected. As mentioned in our first memo, we are awaiting additional guidance from the federal government on Employer-Provided Sick Leave and the Family and Medical Leave Act. If things change after the fact, we will make appropriate adjustments to your vacation balance retroactively, if required. We will also follow the guidance of local and state agencies regarding quarantines (or full shutdowns), should that become a possibility.

Finally, we want to remind any of you who may be struggling with anxiety, fear, or stress—related to COVID-19 or any other issue—to please know that you are not alone and there are counseling and support resources through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The contact number is: 1-800-327-2255.

We will continue to monitor the situation closely, make updates based on new information, and take steps to keep everyone safe. The directors team and Board leadership will consider options and exceptions to existing policies. Similar to this week, we will share an updated operating plan by Friday with any changes to be implemented for following week, that begins on 03/30/20. Your Director will cascade this information to you, so please make sure that your preferred contact information is current. **Please check our Agency FaceBook page and the Staff Resources page on our website (caoginc.org) for breaking updates as things may suddenly change based on new information.**

Thank you for your patience and efforts as we all work together to plan, prepare, and support one another, our clients, and our community during this challenging time. Please do everything that you can to keep yourself and your family safe.

Sincerely,

Veronica Barhite, Board President

The Community Action of Orleans and Genesee, Inc. Board of Directors
& the Agency Director's Team

P.S. If you have significant concerns that are not addressed by your supervisor, please e-mail, text, or leave a voice message for a member of the director's team between the hours of 9AM and 6PM.

Their contact numbers are:

Annette Finch (585) 356-7973

Bonnie Malakie (585) 356-7975

Donna Wojdat (585) 774-1006