GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION

Nonprofit Resources for Preparing for the COVID-19 Pandemic

Topic 2: HR Essentials for COVID-19 Response (Updated 3/20/20)

The Greater New Orleans Foundation wants to help the nonprofits in our region best respond to the disruptions caused by the new coronavirus. Through a partnership with CoronavirusREADY (www.coronavirusreadynow.com), we have developed a set of resources and offered a series of virtual Tele-Town Hall meetings with experts to help nonprofits in our region better respond to public health threats and any associated operational disruptions that may result from this pandemic. You will be able to access all of these materials on the GNOF website or on the CoronavirusREADY website.

Please use the checklist below to help your nonprofit organization to support your staff. For each topic, there are linked resources and tools to assist you. Any questions, please feel free to email info@coronavirusreadynow.com.

1. HR Health & Safety Policies
- ❏ Develop a set of policies and practices to support remote working – see Section 5 below.
- ❏ If you are unable to have all team members work remotely, implement recommended preventative hygiene practices and responsive measures in the workplace. See World Health Organization checklist on workplace hygiene
- ❏ Determine employees risk level per CDC guidelines. In instances in which teams are unable to work remotely, employers must still determine which employees present too high a risk to attend work.
    - ❏ Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor
    - ❏ If an employee may have COVID-19 (possible or confirmed), employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- ❏ For a comprehensive overview of recommended practices, see Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)'s Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for Covid-19

2. Unemployment Insurance, PTO, Sick Leave, Hourly Policies and Practices
- ❏ **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** If your organization will be reducing employee hours, laying off employees, or temporarily closing, please contact the Louisiana Workforce Commission to see what benefits your employees may be eligible for and how to share information with employees. The Louisiana Workforce Commission can also provide information regarding unemployment insurance and other programs and resources to assist you and your employees - Louisiana Workforce Commission COVID-19 Response
- ❏ **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** Answers to **HR Frequently Asked Questions** linked here.
- ❏ Determine location and ownership (e.g. who can view, modify, etc.) of central employee database
- ❏ Notate employee COVID-19 circumstances within central employee database
- ❏ Acknowledge each employee question/response regarding PTO, Sick Leave and/or Hourly Policies and communicate that responses will be provided within a defined timeframe (e.g. 2 working days)

❏ Reference up-to-date guidance for answering questions. At the time this document was last revised the COVID-19 Coronavirus Response Act has been passed – here is a summary of some of its key features for employers to be aware of: [Coronavirus Response Act Summary](#)

❏ Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way

❏ Recognize that workers with ill family members may need to stay home to care for them. See [CDC Interim Guidance on Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in Homes and Residential Communities](#).

3. Supporting Your Staff and Aligning Leadership Team

❏ Hold internal leadership meeting and review health and safety measures, agree on communication norms, develop and norm on remote work practices (see Section 5: Remote Working), and review HR Frequently Asked Questions

❏ Communicate frequently with your staff to acknowledge and ease their concerns. Understand that for a range of reasons, some staff members may be feeling great anxiety.

❏ To the degree possible, try to offer flexibility with PTO, sick leave, and personal leave if people need to take care of family members. Also, try to provide flexibility with staff around child care needs. This [Coronavirus Response Act Summary](#) provides details regarding new regulations around leave policies.

❏ Emphasize to staff to take leave if they feel sick and that they should notify their supervisor if they feel sick.

❏ Make sure managers know how to respond to important HR issues and who to refer team members to if there are HR questions they cannot answer.

❏ Examine your telework, overtime, and leave policies to ensure that they are flexible enough to accommodate the current environment caused by COVID-19

❏ Work with your health insurer and/or insurance broker to provide staff with information about available benefits.

❏ Communicate paid and unpaid leave policies to ensure employees know what benefits they are entitled to and how to access them; request all employees contact their manager when absences are related to personal illness or when caring for a sick family member

❏ Communicate regularly with remote employees about updated emergency response plans concerning COVID-19; allay employee concerns by proactively sharing organizational updates

❏ Consult Board members when crisis management requires reviewing or amending board policies related to daily operations and policy-making

4. Short Term Communications with Employees

❏ Create and share guidelines to staff outlining pertinent information about the transition to a virtual workplace, which may include any or all of the following:
  ❏ Establish unified communication platforms, such as a standard conference line or internal communications platform
  ❏ Virtual work platforms that are free or inexpensive:
    ❏ Conference lines: http://freeconferencecall.com/; https://www.uberconference.com/
    ❏ Video chat: https://zoom.us/; Google hangouts
    ❏ Internal messaging: https://slack.com/

❏ Share good hygiene practices (for staff that must come into the workplace) (see WHO resource above Section 1)
❏ Share HR contact information for employees to ask questions or report absences, sickness, etc.
❏ Keep employees up to date about steps you are taking, any transition to remote working, and how you will keep them informed. For an example, see Sample Staff Communication Regarding Remote Working
❏ Provide staff with weekly updates

5. Remote Working
❏ Create clear expectations about virtual work, including number of working hours, and time of work or flexible working hours
❏ Assist employees in setting up their home office by:
   ❏ Ensuring they have adequate technology to thrive from a home office. Technological necessities are:
      ❏ Computer
      ❏ High-speed internet
      ❏ Headphones
   ❏ Providing training on virtual platforms that will be used for work, especially for those that may have limited interaction with these platforms
❏ Cross-train staff so that critical business functions can continue as staff resources become limited
❏ Consider the needs of older adults, persons with disabilities, and other individuals with access and functional needs in your response plan
❏ Recruit temporary contractors to replace absentee staff if needed

	Adapting to Virtual Workplace	Purpose
1	Example - Continuity of Operations for Remote Working Plan - Internal Communication	Sample COOP communication from the Minnesota Council of Foundations, with an overview of practices for whole-staff transition to virtual/remote working.
2	Remote Work During COVID-19	Move Minneapolis has a comprehensive set of remote working resources and tools on their website.
3	Best Practices in Remote Collaboration	Harvard Business Review Article that suggests remote-working norms in order to promote clear and efficient communication.
4	Example - Remote Work Plan (Cowen Institute) - Internal Communication	Sample communication from the Cowen Institute which outlines a remote work plan.

Other Considerations
1. Establish ongoing communication with local health departments to facilitate access to relevant information during the pandemic
2. Continue to communicate regularly (e.g. at least once a week) with staff on overall organizational issues, updates and/or changes to remote working situation

3. Ensure the security of business and personal information as all work moves online
4. Begin long term planning around remote work in the event that this pandemic develops into an annual or seasonal occurrence

The information provided above and through the links does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information, content, and materials available in and through this document are for general informational purposes only. Information in this document may not constitute the most up-to-date legal or other information. This document contains links to other third-party websites. Such links are only for the convenience of the reader. Readers should contact their attorney to obtain advice with respect to any particular legal matter. No reader should act or refrain from acting on the basis of information given above without first seeking legal advice from counsel. Only your individual attorney can provide assurances that the information contained – and your interpretation of it – is applicable or appropriate to your particular situation.