

## UCP OF GREATER CLEVELAND STAFF UPDATE – MARCH 24, 2020

While in the middle of our second week of a planned three-week closure, I offer this update with plans to arrange teleconferences that all staff can call into to hear my update and to ask any and all questions you may still have. We are planning to host all-staff calls as soon as we can arrange for the technology to allow for it. You will receive a message asap with phone numbers or web addresses to be used to participate in those calls.

You should have received a call from your supervisor yesterday or today. If you have not spoken with him/her, please call them soon. We are moving as rapidly and responsibly as possible. It seems as though every time we make a decision, news is released from our federal or state government that causes us to rethink or shift direction – all in an effort to retain and pay you for as long as possible. The current list of evolving considerations includes these external influences/decisions:

- Federal Government's issuance of checks to all citizens under a certain level of income
- Small Business Loans that UCP could take out to cover payroll
- Possible financial relief from Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Possible financial relief from Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Potential Business Interruption Insurance coverage (currently denied but the insurance industry is being pushed to allow claims)
- FMLA staff options

Some of you are continuing to work at our **Edendale and Memphis** group homes so please know that much of what is included in these updates does not apply to you. Many other staff members continue to be engaged in various billable services such as tele-therapy and virtual employment services. Still others have supported numerous client/family interactions and the vast amount of administrative functions (including processing this week's payroll). **The agency thanks you** for your absolute commitment to our clients and our Agency, and we hope you are taking good care of yourselves and your families.

You all need answers! We are well aware of that, and in fact, this has been our primary focus every day for the last 11 days and will continue to be. Daily we seek every bit of information we can find on any type of financial relief that we can direct to your pay and any programmatic information to support continued services. Many of you have asked questions over these past few weeks and I offer you some answers to the best of our ability at this point. Please understand that the answers I offer today could change tomorrow based upon actions taken by external forces over which we have no control. **If after reading the explanations offered below, you have questions, I cannot stress enough that you are WELCOME to call me (440-454-1363), Beth (216-534-9960) or your supervisor at any time during this global event.**

### **EXTENDED AGENCY CLOSURE/WORK CONTINUATION/FILING FOR UNEMPLOYMENT**

We initially announced an agency closure (except group homes and select community employment activities/services) with a return to work date of 4/6. That return date is now unlikely and we have no way of knowing how much longer we will all be required to abide by mandates related to the coronavirus outbreak. **The agency's services will resume as soon as possible** based upon public health directives and your support. Within the next day or two, you will each be notified about your work schedule beyond this week. That information will then guide you in your decision on taking vacation which is explained below.

**Starting next week, some employees will be furloughed (laid-off temporarily) and other staff will be notified of a reduced number of hours or a salary reduction.** For any employee who is notified that their pay/hours will be reduced next week (fully or partially), you will have the opportunity to claim up to five days of vacation in order to supplement your pay or, **POSSIBLY, apply for unemployment.** I say POSSIBLY because there may be other government relief offered between now and then that could delay the need to apply for unemployment. This includes the potential new stimulus that the Federal Government is considering right now. We have done everything possible to delay or remove the need to apply for unemployment by paying for this three-week period through regular pay and optional vacation pay with hopes that some of this other relief would come through.

Many of you asked, “Why are we waiting?” and “When do I apply for unemployment?” We have not offered a date because we just don’t have one yet. **In the next few days, you will be notified of your work status moving forward.**

For anyone wishing to apply for unemployment, we will be able to offer some limited assistance including sharing basic application information, but each of you will need to make this decision on your own— it is truly something that only you can do. We recommend you do not apply for it until after you receive notification of your work status for next week. Otherwise, your application may be denied/delayed and you may have to start over. Again, in the coming days, you will be notified of any reduction to your pay/hours.

#### **VACATION OFFERED FOR WEEK OF 3/30/20**

**All UCP of Greater Cleveland staff, working and non-working, have been paid your full pay through this Friday, 3/27. If you are notified of reduced hours/pay for next week 3/29 – 4/4, you will be permitted to claim up to five days of vacation in order to supplement your pay. If you have not yet earned five days of vacation, you can borrow from the future.** Utilization of vacation next week will be capped at your normal standard hours. Any vacation hours you choose to apply will be deducted from your balance and it will not be reimbursed back to you in the future. Remember, using vacation time is optional. **We are offering vacation and not short-term absence paid time for a couple of reasons:** First, we have no way of knowing when we will all be back to work. We have great concern about squeezing a year’s worth of vacation for 200 employees into 6-7 months versus 12 months. We may not be in a financial position to allow for you to claim short-term pay now and all of your vacation later this year. We certainly understand your question and we wish we could offer the option of vacation or short-term absence.

Some questions have been asked that we are not able to answer just yet including, “Can I take unpaid time at the holidays?” We will consider that once we know more.

#### **“BORROWED WORKER” OPPORTUNITY**

I continue to remind those of you who may be interested that we are offering alternative work opportunities with both UCP’s group homes (contact Sam at [spuccinelli@ucpcleveland.org](mailto:spuccinelli@ucpcleveland.org) or 216-409-0709) as well as other local DD provider agencies in need of direct support staff to meet their clients’ residential service needs. If you have not been in touch with Bob Taylor or Donna Woods about working in a direct support capacity for another service provider, I encourage you to consider it and reach out to Bob at [btaylor@ucpcleveland.org](mailto:btaylor@ucpcleveland.org) or 216-453-4954 or Donna at [dwoods@ucpcleveland.org](mailto:dwoods@ucpcleveland.org) or 216-346-

7728 ASAP. There will be many direct support staff in town, such as yourselves, potentially competing for these openings with other providers that will offer a premium rate of pay. Please note that you would maintain your employment with UCP during a temporary placement with another agency.

**Some of you voiced concern over other agencies following protocols. We are working with a handful of well-known, reputable agencies who we know very well and fully trust that they are following protocols. For instance, they are not allowing any staff to work in more than one home and have all sanitizing and health checks in place as well as needed personal protective equipment you might need to your job. You can apply if you have direct support experience or have fulfilled all of your basic training requirements with UCP. We have worked hard to develop agreements with these agencies and put in place processes that will help this program succeed. Please call Donna with any questions.**

I apologize for the long message but want to be sure to provide you the information you need. Again, we will continue to be in touch as often as possible. Please call with questions or concerns.

Thank you,  
Trish & Leadership Team