

Anonymous Nonprofit

Sector: Nonprofit | Size Range: 50-99 Employees | Interviewed: 4/22/2020

The Organization

The organization is a nonprofit servicing clients throughout NJ.

Staffing

Prior to the pandemic, few employees had the capacity to work remotely. A few staff members already had laptops for when they would travel to see clients. Other than that, everyone came into the office. The organization started to make adjustments beginning the week of March 9th. That week, key personnel in the office, including the Director of Administration and Executive Director, down with their IT person to discuss a remote work transition. They began to transition employees in phases. Remote access was first set up with employees of theirs who had to quarantine after returning from travel abroad. They were followed by employees who needed to be home for childcare. Additional staff members followed. Their IT person established capabilities to look up client lists, update their client database, and access documents remotely through their network. Secretaries call in every day, three times per day to retrieve calls, and individual staff members can call in and retrieve calls as well. The organization receives client referrals over email.

Staffing

As employees began transitioning to remote work, employees started staggering work hours and workdays. Each of their locations in NJ have different structures to how employees stagger their office and remote days. For example, one office has one person coming in once per week while another office's Office Manager and Secretary come in on alternating days. All secretaries, office managers, and receptionists work from home.

Communication and Coordination

During the first two weeks of transition to remote work, members of the leadership team conducted daily conference calls and would check in with staff members throughout the week. Managers would have daily meetings to talk over any issues. After the first two weeks, check-in calls slowed down to calls on Tuesdays and Thursdays, lasting an hour to ninety minutes. During those calls the managers and supervisors would discuss the staffing, any issues that had arisen, the status of referrals coming in, and so on. The administrative staff has calls one day per week to go over contracts they were working on, the bills coming into the office, etc. Each office location normally staffs 8-10 people, so managers and staff members communicate constantly and freely.

They worked to make sure that their clients and the agencies which refer clients to them were aware of their operational changes. They shared information with agencies on how to get in touch with their staff and a fact sheet showing how they would keep working with

clients. They have sent flyers sharing updates. While during the first two or three weeks of the transition clients were allowed to come into the office on certain days with limited hours if necessary (with safety protocols in place), they eventually stopped allowing clients in. At first, big signs were posted for walk-ins detailing the safety protocols to follow in office, based on CDC guidance. Once clients stopped being allowed in, postings went up in every office stating the staff was working remotely and sharing a number to call.

Impact of Uncertainty

Because they receive state funding they face uncertainty posed by the extension of the NJ fiscal year and the status of their contracts. Though they do not yet have an official schedule to return employees to work, they have started to contemplate the best practices to handle the transition. The leadership team hopes to develop a survey asking employees what it will take to make them feel safe coming back to work.