



March 20, 2020

Hi everyone:

We hope you are all doing well in this extremely stressful time. The events of the past few weeks are truly unprecedented, as the COVID-19 pandemic seems to create changes on a daily, if not hourly basis.

During this uncertain time, we have seen racism and xenophobia rear its ugly head, whether it be attacks against people of Asian descent or our elected officials continuing to invoke racist stereotypes or perpetuate bigotry when talking about this pandemic. Furthermore, we know public health crises tend to disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income families. Sadly, our field is not immune from these ills. We are concerned about what we have heard across the state since the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic, whether that be who can work from home, staff being laid off, or differing expectations for similarly situated staff.

As a result, we call on programs to make decisions that not only look for the welfare of their staff, but also do so in a manner that ensures they are all treated equally. Now is the time for us to make decisions based on the greater good – whether that be following the guidance of public health officials or ensuring that our staff feel secure in their jobs.

Indeed, unlike most other situations, there are some unique advantages to those of us working at non-profits. As we have previously indicated, the guidance we received from funders is that we can continue to pay staff utilizing grant funds, even in a pandemic-related shutdown (provided the agency has a policy allowing such a course of action). We believe this is a great example of a decision we can make based on the greater good, and it ensures the staff who work so hard providing services to survivors are protected during this unprecedented event.

Furthermore, we urge to you look for creative solutions as to how your agency operates including: allowing staff to work remotely, adjusting their daily work, paying them while on administrative leave, and finding ways to maintain benefits such as health insurance. Above all, it is imperative that our staff is treated equally in the decisions we make as leaders of programs.

Please know that WCASA remains committed to helping programs through this time. While we are working remotely, we are available for technical assistance. By coming together and supporting one another we will make it through this.

The WCASA Staff