Return to Work Action Plan

September 7, 2021
**Introduction**

Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC) is committed to:

- Returning to the office safely;
- Continuing to maintain high quality services by providing timely and accurate information to our staff, our colleagues, and the public;
- Retaining efficiencies and technology advancements adopted during COVID; and
- Engaging staff and the public regularly to ensure our procedures, policies and practices are inclusive and serve the diverse stakeholders that engage with the PHDC and its various functions.

**Return to Work Timeline**

**Phase I: Sustain Work from Home**

Since March 2020, most PHDC employees have been working 100% from home. Others have been working on a hybrid schedule (based on their own or their department’s needs). Employees will continue to work in their current capacity until September 7, 2021.

1. **Communication and Services**

   While working from home, staff are currently available via phone, email and through virtual meeting platforms to perform their work. Those interested in contacting us can do so via email or voicemail. Staff respond to the request in a timely manner. All phone numbers and/or email addresses of public facing staff are available on our website.

   Staff continue to check voicemail from home regularly and some staff have set up call forwarding from their office phone to a device to directly receive calls. Our general office numbers are answered by PHDC staff on an agency-issued phone during regular business hours.

   The public can request meetings through our general email boxes or by directly emailing the staff they are working with. Almost all meetings occur via online meeting platforms. When necessary, staff have met constituents at the building to exchange documents or materials in the lobby. In the rare case that requires a member of the public to review files onsite, staff will meet the person in the lobby and escort them to the offices for the meeting. **This will continue to be our meeting protocol at this stage.**

   During this stage, PHDC has explored effective online scheduling tools that allow for in-person meetings to be scheduled in advance and to offer office hours for the public to come onsite and meet with staff. PHDC seeks to align wherever possible with city departments and leverage systems to streamline the experience for the public, therefore we are engaged with L&I to discuss ways to align our practices.

   **All public board meetings will continue to be held virtually.** Information regarding each of the board processes are available through PHDC’s website. Information regarding all meetings and
agendas are available to the public prior each meeting. Public comments can be submitted via mail, email, or by live participation at the meeting via zoom. Members of the public who do not have a computer, smart phone, or internet access may participate using a landline phone. During this period, PHDC will continue to work through mechanisms of how to hold future public board meetings both in-person and online. This includes assessing meeting room upgrades to ensure the technology is available to stream meeting for viewing off-site as well as allow members of the public to come on site and participate in the meeting.

2. Equipment and Materials

All PHDC staff have laptops to work from home. During this time, all remaining staff will transition their onsite equipment from desktops to laptops with docking stations.

On June 10th, David Thomas, CEO & President of PHDC sent an email to all staff advising them that they need to complete cyber training and update their malware before they return to work. OIT’s messages have also been shared with staff. We are also encouraging staff with limited skills to work with their supervisors to come onsite prior to September 7, 2021 to complete the upgrades. PHDC IT staff are available with onsite presence daily to support staff that have challenges in the updating process.

3. Preparing Offices for RTW

PHDC cubicles have been equipped with plexiglass and additional cubicle dividers to define staff workspaces. The PHDC Health & Safety Committee will continue to listen to concerns from staff and consider ways to address concerns consistent with city policy.

PHDC Conference Rooms on 16th and 17th floors
Working with OIT, PHDC has identified improvements necessary to prepare the 16th and 17th floor conference rooms and boardrooms with equipment to allow for hybrid meetings that meet OIT standards. These improvements will allow some staff or partners to participate remotely while others are onsite. PHDC has executed a contract with OIT’s vendor for 1234 Market Street to improve the meeting spaces.

Materials have been ordered and work will commence once the equipment has been received.

PHDC staff will participate in public meetings that adhere to City and CDC guidelines.

For indoor meetings and activities: For community meetings we expect that the host organization and the meeting participants will follow City and CDC directives. Assuming that they do, employees are expected to participate in the meeting.
Outdoor meetings, activities, or walking tours:

For community meetings, we expect that the host organization and the meeting participants will follow City and CDC directives. Assuming that they do, employees are expected to participate in the meeting. We will continue to follow Philadelphia’s COVID-19 health and safety guidelines and communicate these guidelines to our public partners.

Lastly, PHDC purchased and will distribute two cloth masks and one personal bottle of hand sanitizer to all staff. These supplies will be available upon the return to the office. Additionally, hand sanitizers have been placed throughout the floor, including at the front desk, near photocopiers, in the lunchroom and kitchenettes. These supplies will be regularly monitored and maintained. New signage at high touch areas, will also be posted to encourage staff to use wipes to clear shared workspaces and regularly use the sanitizers if they cannot wash their hands after working, eating, or attending meetings with other staff members where they shared materials or supplies.

Phase II: RTW Two Days per Week

As of September 7, 2021, the goal is for all staff to come back to the office at least two days per week. Occupancy will be at less than full capacity. Scheduling will be based on the business needs of the agency and its functional lines as well as, where possible, staff preferences.

The COVID-19 Hours of Work Side Agreement between AFSCME Local 1971 and PHDC’s management will expire on Monday, September 6. All employees will be expected to adhere to PHDC’s normal hours of work (7 ½ hours per day, excluding the lunch period), including but not limited to the Flex-Time Policy and Late Policy.

All in-person meetings with the public will be scheduled by appointment only

Public board meetings will continue to be held virtually as we continue to work through mechanisms to hold hybrid public meetings.

All meeting rooms will accommodate hybrid meeting platforms. We will continue to distribute laptops and docking stations to all staff. With staff input signage will be posted outside each meeting room to encouraging the meeting host to wipe down the tables and equipment with anti-bacterial wipes after the meeting occurs.

In person meetings will be limited to small number of people onsite based on the ability of the meeting room to accommodate social distancing. Additional staff can participate via their computers either at their workstation or from home. Staff on site will be encouraged to use headphones or find a vacant meeting space so as to not disturb colleagues. Staff shall accommodate required in-person meetings such as City Council hearings. As noted earlier, PHDC staff will participate in community meetings that follow City and CDC guidelines.
Phase III: Take Stock and Address Challenges.

Phase II protocols will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and adjusted if necessary. In mid-November 2021, Senior Staff will solicit additional staff feedback by survey and will assess the success of the Phase II opening. If it is determined that changes need to be made to accommodate increased productivity and service delivery, staff may be required to come in more than two days per week or we may increase walk-in appointment days.

By January 3, 2022 it is our intent to be able to hold public board meetings both in person and virtually, however, we will have limits as to how many people will be able to attend in person. Those limits will be refined during Phase I re-opening and implemented during Phase II.

Other Considerations

PHDC continues to communicate with staff on changing public health protocols. As the Administration and Health Department adapt to transmission rates, we will consider aligning our practices with the broader city policies. That said, we recognize there may be a lag between personal perception of safety and prevailing health regulations so we will work to support staff to transition back to work and respect individual’s points of view and personal space needs.

1. Employee Screening, Exposure and Confirmed Illness Protocols

Keeping staff safe is our priority. To accomplish this task, we will follow the Health Department’s recommended procedures for screening employees who return to work, dealing with exposure to COVID-19, responding to a confirmed case of COVID-19 and reporting transparency.

All staff that enter PHDC offices, for any amount of time, must complete the online Employee Screening tool [https://www.phila.gov/employee-screener/#/](https://www.phila.gov/employee-screener/#/)

- Staff are expected to answer screening questions truthfully and prior to entering the offices.
- Results are then shared via email with the person’s direct supervisor and the Executive Assistant to the President/CEO.
- Upon confirmation that the person is clear, the screening results are discarded.
- If a person has NOT been cleared by the screener, they will work from home. The employee and the supervisor will discuss alternative WFH activities until such time the employee is cleared to return. If they are onsite, they will immediately leave the building.
- Staff cleared to work on site are noted on a shared calendar.
- The shared calendar is updated and available for all staff to view. The shared calendar color codes information based upon the location that staff member works.
2. COVID-19 Exposure and Confirmed Illness Protocol

All staff are encouraged to take sick days when they feel sick and limit their transmission exposure to the public or colleagues. We specifically communicate that if they feel sick, or exhibit symptoms corresponding with COVID-19, they should take a sick day or, if able to perform work functions, to WFH. Staff who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms when they arrive at work or become sick during the day will immediately be separated from other staff and sent home. Staff who develop symptoms outside of work are encouraged to notify their supervisor and stay home in compliance with COVID-19 quarantine guidance from the health department. Staff should not return to work until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation and have consulted with a healthcare provider. PHDC will ask staff to observe Philadelphia Department of Public Health guidance to calculate Isolations and Quarantine Periods.

Staff who test positive for COVID-19 or believe they have been infected will be referred to the protocols outlined by the Department of Health.

a) PHDC Contact Tracing protocols

Once informed by the employee, the Health Department or other appropriate agency of a positive COVID-19 test, an HR professional will conduct an investigation to determine possible contacts. A key factor when determining contacts is to identify any employee who has come in close contact with the individual, defined as being within approximately 6 feet of the COVID-19 case for a prolonged period (10 minutes or more).

The investigator will:

- Immediately notify 1234 Market Building Management
- Ask the employee to provide the names of all employees and or constituents they have contacted as defined above, especially if repeatedly.
- Ask the employee to provide all locations in which they have worked recently, if the employee was on the worksite.
- If the employee cannot or will not share this information, the investigator should, working with the supervisor and work records such as crew logs, calendars, etc. identify those employees who may, during the normal course of business, have come in regular contact with the individual.
- • As much as possible, for privacy reasons, the name of any employee who tested positive should not be shared.
- • Notify all close contacts that they may have been exposed to an employee who has tested positive. All close contacts will be advised by PHDC’S HR staff on the current protocols and communicate with HR staff on the proposed plan.
b) Social Distancing Protocol
The staff will follow and regularly share the current Health Department and 1234 Market Street building protocols with staff. Managers will work to limit staff interactions and support social distancing schedules to limit the number of staff on site.

c) Pandemic Coordinator
Within the Department of Planning of Development (DPD), Casey Jeronimo serves as the Pandemic Coordinator, a liaison between staff and the City of Philadelphia’s Risk Management Division. She communicates information about the Pandemic to leadership and employees as a continued effort to keep staff current on COVID-19 workforce related information. The Pandemic Coordinator has a duty to serve the department in its efforts to reduce potential risk of employee infection and help in the process of taking steps to stop the spread of infection in our workplace.

These duties include assisting in plans for facilities and operations, assist in implementation and maintenance of plans, communicate effective measures, post/distribute information, monitor compliance and effectiveness, assist the HR representatives in investigations of COVID-19 related incidents, track infection control needs, and answer employee COVID-19 related questions.

DPD’s Pandemic Coordinator regularly attends Risk Management’s weekly meetings. DPD leadership will continue to ensure her participation, and participation of designated staff in any required training sessions sponsored by the Risk Management Division. The Pandemic Coordinator reports to DPD’s Deputy Director for Human Resources and regularly provides updates to the Deputy Mayor and First Deputy Director, who regularly share that information with the PHDC’s CEO & President. The Deputy Mayor or PHDC’s CEO & President communicate all regulations and requirements to PHDC staff to ensure the message is communicated from leadership.

Additionally, staff will be informed they can report any violations of safety protocols to PHDC’s Health & Safety Committee.

4. Department Operation Procedures
Deliveries: PHDC will continue as it has since the beginning of the pandemic to work with building protocols to manage the delivery of equipment. When equipment is needed to be provided to staff to facilitate WFH, staff work to identify an efficient means for the employee to come on site and pickup said equipment or the equipment is delivered to their home following social distancing protocols.
5. PHDC’s COVID-19 Department Return to Work Point of Contact:

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