



October 14, 2020

Si necesita esta carta en español, por favor, vea: people-inc.org/coronavirus

Dear Family Member,

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, I want to reassure you that our priorities remain on the safety and health of the people our agency supports, as well as all of our employees. It takes all of us working together to limit and contain the spread of this virus, which can have serious effects on your loved one, others they share programs with, our staff and your family. We are asking for your help:

- Please ensure mask-wearing when your loved one visits or is in the community
- Observe isolation and quarantine directives if travel is involved, or as advised. With holidays coming soon, please take a conservative approach to planning. We encourage arrangements that **avoid heightened risk** posed by travel to restricted areas.
- Don't send or accompany a loved one to program, if they are sick or exhibiting [symptoms](#). The same considerations are in place for scheduling visits to group homes – if you aren't feeling well, please reschedule your visit.
- Please strongly consider getting a flu shot to reduce susceptibility of your immune system. This also helps ensure healthcare providers respond to the influx of COVID-19 cases without the added burden of treating additional patients for the flu. We're doing our part to make flu shots available to people we support and staff, and they are widely available throughout the community.

While many People Inc. services remained in full operation, others were suspended or significantly altered. A planned and gradual reopening of our programs has occurred, while some aspects still remain in progress. People Inc. continues to monitor community experience with COVID-19 exposure and our region's numbers of positive cases and hospitalizations. We have been operating in a proactive manner with a range of precautionary measures since early spring. As there have been recent spikes in positive cases in our Western New York region, please remain advised that progression, pause or reversal of our phases of program opening/operations and protocols will be determined by our Emergency Management Team, based on continual monitoring and regulatory guidance. Updates may be made rapidly as a result. Please visit our website at people-inc.org/reopeningphaseb for more information.

Our Day Habilitation Programs have reopened with additional safety procedures, with the exception of Lancaster Day Services, which remains closed. There have been numerous questions specifically about our Day Programs. As a result, we have set up a special Day Habilitation and Vocational Services COVID-19 Phone Line to receive your questions at 716.529.6505.

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Thank you to the many families who have participated in our agency conference call updates over the past few months. We have another upcoming Informational Session for families that I encourage you to join. It will be held on **Wednesday, October 21 at 6:30 p.m. EST**. Operational updates will be provided, along with answers to your questions, which can be sent in advance and during the call, to COVIDconcern@people-inc.org or texted to 716.868.9233. **The conference call number is: 1.607.442.6488 and the code is: 367 508 677#.**

During the most recent agency conference call, questions were shared about our People Inc. Foundation COVID-19 Relief Fund (people-inc.org/covidrelief). It was established so that we can continue assisting thousands of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, special needs, families and older adults. A recent directive by the Division of Budget was made to withhold 20 percent of State-only, non-Medicaid funds to providers, which will potentially hurt people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by putting certain necessary services in jeopardy. We continue to advocate for non-profit organizations, like People Inc., to receive Medicaid funds in stimulus plans and loan assistance. Supporters are encouraged to contact the Governor's Office by calling 518.474.1041 and leave this message:

"The recent directive by the Division of Budget to withhold 20 percent of State-only, non-Medicaid funds to providers will potentially hurt people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by putting certain necessary services in jeopardy. Please direct DOB to reverse the decision on the 20 percent withhold. Thank you, Governor."

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank you for being part of the People Inc. family. We're recognizing our 50th anniversary of the agency throughout the year until the end of summer 2021. While we won't be able to celebrate in-person during the short-term due to the national pandemic, we look forward to safer and better times ahead. I'm so thankful for our loyal families, nearly 4,000 employees, supporters, government leaders and community partners for being a part of the People Inc. journey for the past five decades.

As a reminder, agency updates are posted on the Coronavirus section of our website, people-inc.org/coronavirus. If you have questions or concerns, please speak directly with program management, use our dedicated email at COVIDconcern@people-inc.org or our general Coronavirus Phone Line at 716.817.7445. Our Advocacy Phone Line is also available for people we support to ask non-emergency questions by calling 716.322.7070.

Your support is appreciated as we work together through this extremely challenging time.

Be well and safe,



Rhonda Frederick
President & CEO
People Inc.