

Supporting Our Team While Fulfilling Our

Mission

Rhode Island Housing

Management Innovation: Human Resources

HFA Staff Contact

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UNPRECEDENTED AND CHALLENGING TIMES

COVID-19 may have closed many businesses, but as the statewide housing finance agency, our work is too important for us to stop, especially as Rhode Islanders need us now more than ever before. While supporting our customers and residents is of the upmost importance, we can't do the great work we do without our staff.

The global health pandemic has completely upended the way humans interact and work. Within a matter of days RIHousing had to prepare and support our staff as employees transitioned to remote work while continuing our efforts to provide housing programs and resources to Rhode Islanders. There's no exaggeration to say that responding to COVID-19 has been one of the (if not 'the') biggest challenges this agency has experienced in our almost 50-year history. *While our organization has grown over the years, one thing remained constant: we worked together in our downtown Providence headquarters, utilizing physical access to one another, our customers and our partners to collaborate and succeed.*

This closeness allowed us to build a strong team that could have easily been upended with the transition to remote work. While the transition presented technological and resource challenges (setting up employees to work remotely while also providing laptops, monitors and other items to perform their work), it has created "social" challenges as well. Used to in-person meetings, collaborations around employees' desks and the ability to meet face-to-face with customers and partners, staff now had to learn a new way of doing their work, all while dealing with their own personal stresses relating to COVID.

SUPPORT THROUGH COMMUNICATION, INFORMATION, EMPLOYEE SUPPORT, TECHNOLOGY

Recognizing the challenges faced by our diverse employee population, our Human Resources team worked closely with our Information Technology (IT), Facilities and Communications departments as well as Executive leadership to *develop a responsive and supportive program to strengthen agency operations while ensuring staff had the information and resources they need to succeed and stay healthy.*

Developing a series of resources and communications tools, we've been able to keep staff connected and working while ensuring their own health and well-being. Our employee engagement and support effort centers around several key areas:

COMMUNICATION:

- COVID-19 resources page on our employee intranet
 - With little time to prepare, our team worked to develop a special resource section of our employee intranet. Serving as the "hub" of information, it includes employee policies and procedures, information on maintaining employee health and well-being, announcements and updates on the impact of COVID-19.
- Ongoing updates via email, intranet posts and teleconferencing
 - HR staff have supported employees via a series of e-communications offering support and resources for staff, as well as updates on COVID-19's impact on our programs and work, plans for reopening of our office building and links to resources to support mental health and well-being.

- HR held an all-staff teleconference to review updates and information relating to remote work, as well as the procedures and protocols that RIHousing has put in place based on the guidelines from the State, CDC and RI Department of Health.
- Team Building
 - Use of Microsoft Teams to ensure connectivity of staff; replacing in-person staff meetings with virtual meetings via Teams ensures staff remain connected and engaged.
 - Managers are encouraged to hold regular "check-ins" with their staff and offer opportunities for "fun" virtual meetings (examples include remote Yoga, trivia and more.)

INFORMATION:

- Protocols, Policies, Tips and Management Tools
 - Via a series of newly created Policies, Procedures and Management Tools, our HR team worked with our Legal department to provide guidelines for remote work, roles and responsibilities of managers, etc.
- Creative and informative signage throughout the building as staff return to the office
 - A return to the office for staff necessitated the development of a series of informational signage to ensure employee health and compliance with state and CDC guidelines. Working closely with our Communications team, informational and engaging signage was developed to promote social distancing, awareness around health screening and reporting.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT:

- Webinars, Supportive Services and Programs for Employee Health and Well-Being
 - Promoting and connecting employees and their families to programs, trainings and services relating to mental health, wellness and mind-body well-being.
 - Promotion of financial services webinars and trainings to support employee financial health.

TECHNOLOGY:

- Development of a new Employee Screening App
 - With a short time to prepare for required daily employee screenings prior to a return of staff to our office building as part of the state's reopening efforts, Human Resources worked closely with our IT team as they created an app to push out a daily COVID screening questionnaire using a free Microsoft product. The questionnaire is sent through RIHousing' Agility system (already in place for emergency notifications to employees) and was created and tested in the span of about one week.
 - The link to the daily screening is sent to all staff via our Agility system. The link is sent to employees' work email, personal email and personal cell phone. If anyone is coming into the office, they are required to activate and complete the screening. HR staff remotely monitor the incoming screening questionnaires against a daily employee log tracked through our fob security system. Any staff member fobbing into the building must have a matching, completed screening questionnaire. Any employees who do not have a smartphone can access the screening in the lobby using an iPad.
 - Developed in response to state guidelines requiring employee screenings, the app is especially notable as we deployed this with a quick turn-around, no additional costs,

linked two existing platforms, utilizing a creative approach to avoid the purchase of any new software. Developed in-house, the app meets all state requirements for screening, ensures employee confidentiality as only HR staff accesses the information, can be done remotely so as not to require additional on-site staff to be present, is easy to update and adapt as new rules and regulations are put into place.

- Employees appreciate the fact that our HR team has spent the time and energy to ensure safety as a top priority. The app gives staff a sense of security as they return to the office.
- Deployment of Remote Technology and Support
 - We deployed a record 77 of laptops and provided extended IT service hours to all employees working from home.
 - Additionally, we created employee access on the RIHousing.com entrance point for all employees to use the Business Continuity page of the intranet to connect to all applications by Division.
 - Use of 'softphone' system to allow employees to make outgoing calls from their work phone numbers when using their personal cell phones.
 - Committee and Board meetings held telephonically in order to conduct business crucial to the continued work of the organization.
 - Training and support of staff in use of Teams and other remote technologies to ensure business continuity and connectivity.

THE "NEW NORMAL"

Three months into the "new normal" and we are thrilled to report that we've been able to build an effective "bridge" to support our staff, maintain strong teams, support remote work, and employee health and well-being.

Utilizing existing communications channels and technology, RIHousing has been able to keep our staff informed, healthy, and safe during the COVID-19 health crisis. With no additional cost for staffing or technology, we have been able to provide employees with the support and resources they need to succeed in meeting the emerging and evolving needs of our customers while ensuring their well-being.

Like our sister HFAs, we are asking our staff to work harder, work smarter, and innovate, all while dealing with the challenges of working remotely with little time to plan. As we now transition to some return to the office environment, we are committed to continuing our efforts to support our employees with a combination of in-office and remote programs.

WHY IT'S AWARD-WORTHY

We're proud of the fact that despite the challenges and a transition to remote work, we've been able to support our employees and preserve what makes RIHousing such a great place to work: our sense of community! Utilizing existing outreach channels, technology and staff input from our HR, IT, Legal and Communications teams, we've developed an effective and no-cost way of supporting staff and keeping them engaged. As we respond to the impacts of COVID-19 on residents and the housing landscape of our state, we need the experience, expertise and dedication of our team in order to move forward.



Management Innovation: Human Resources

Supporting Our Team While Fulfilling Our Mission



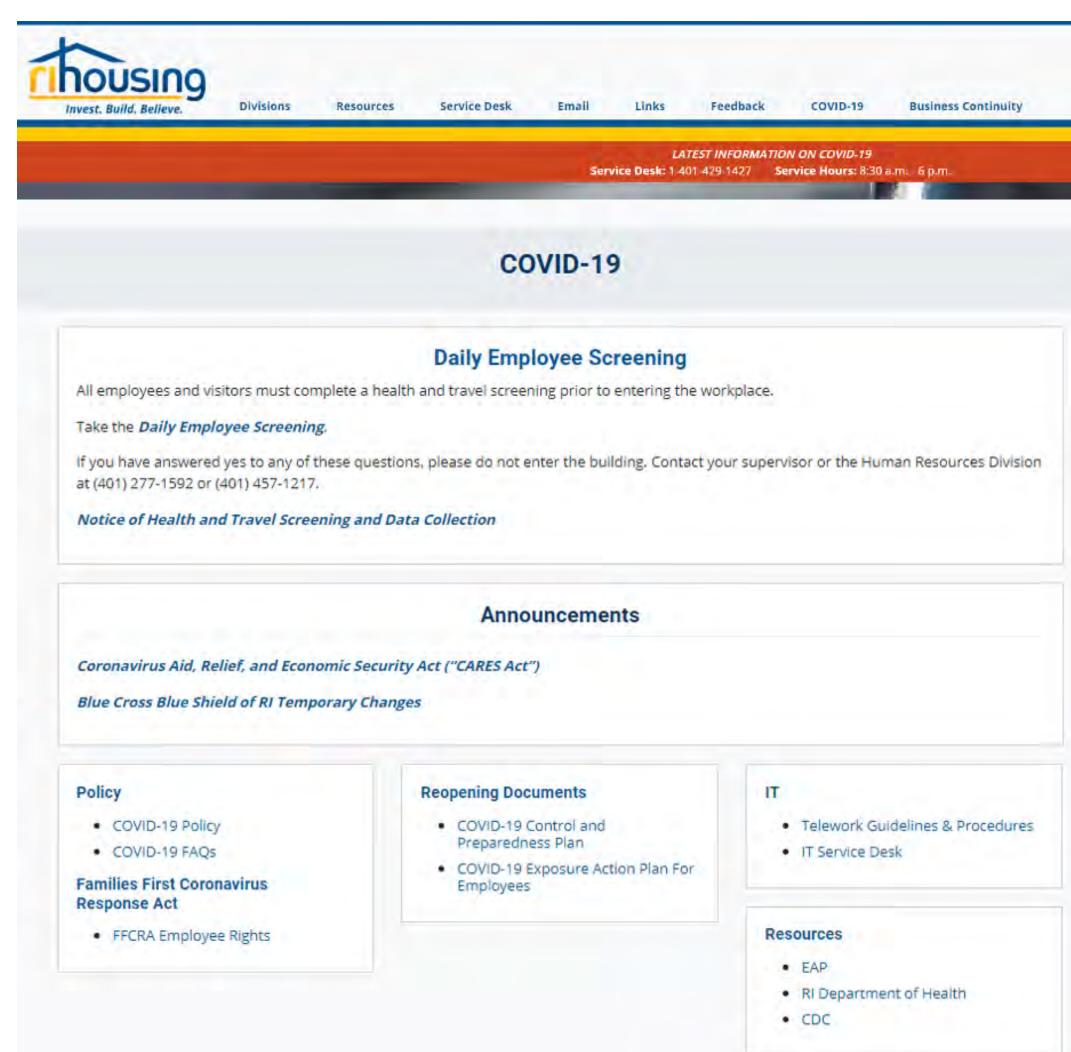
COMMUNICATION

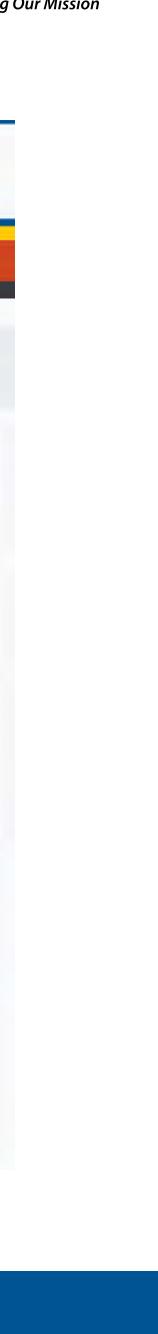
Development of COVID-19 Employee Intranet

New banner added to home page of our employee intranet, prominently displaying link to the latest staffing information relating to COVID-19 as well as contact information for our Service Desk for assistance.

	Busin	ess Continuity	
In the event of an outage of	r an emergency, please refer to the	following resources in order to continue	e your necessary job functions.
		All Users	
	Connect to VPN DUC	Setup Installing Jive GoToConnect	e
• ADP	Office365	• Ser	vice Desk
 Docusign 	OneDrive	• Sm	artSheet
Email	Reviewsn	ap • USo	canIT
Jive Softphone	Secret Set	rver	
Communications & Marketing	Compliance	Executive	Homeownership
ArcGIS	SharePoint File Share	SharePoint File Share	Ellie Mae / Encompass / LOS / ECC
Constant Contact			Counselor Direct

We created employee access on the RIHousing.com entrance point for all employees to use the Business Continuity page of the internet to connect to all applications by Division.





COMMUNICATION Ongoing 'Agency Updates' to all staff from Executive Director

Important Reopening Information

Thursday, May 14, 2020 at 3:41 PM

To: RIH All Employees

This message is high priority.

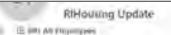
Dear Colleagues:

I hope this message finds you and your families doing well and staying healthy. I want to provide you with an overview of actions that RIHousing is taking to protect its employees as some of you are re-entering the workplace over the next few weeks.

We have recently completed our Control and Preparedness Plan and Exposure Action Plan which are required by the State for businesses that are currently operating or intending to open in Phase I. The plans detail responsibilities of managers and employees; office entry and screening procedures; hygiene etiquette and protective measures; cleaning protocols; social distancing controls; exposure protocols; communication and training; and confidentiality. All protocols and procedures are in accordance with State regulations and CDC guidance. Please review all COVID-19 documents and resources prior to May 18th on the intranet page at: <u>https://employees.rihousing.com/covid-19</u>. Please check this page often for updates.

Important information that I want to bring to the attention of staff currently working in the office and employees that will shortly be returning to the workplace:

- 1. Stay home if you are not feeling well or leave the office immediately if you become ill during the work day.
- 2. You will be required to complete a screening prior to entering the building. The screening will be sent through our Agility system via email and text. Do not enter the building until you have completed the screening. If you are working from home for a day, you do not need to complete the screening. However, even a quick stop into the office will require you to complete the screening. For those who have allergies or other symptoms that may align with the COVID-related health screening, do not enter the building - contact your manager and HR. HR will review the matter to determine if you can enter the building.
- 3. You are required to wear a mask or face covering that covers your mouth and nose when entering the building and while outside of your personal work space, including hallways, stairways, rest rooms, kitchen, copy area and meeting rooms. Masks will be available at the door if you need one



Colleagues

bope this email finds all of you and yours healthy and feeling well. Spring is my favorite time of year. Those you have had the opportunity to get out and enjoy the sun --when it's not raining!

I'm happy to let you know that we have started the planning process on transitioning all of you back to the office. The transition will be staged and will be designed to accommodate staff while balancing the need to operate our business lines. You will be hearing more from us on the transition shordly, in the interim, if you have questions or concerns please reach out to your manager or to Barbara Farrand.

Since March, we have been conducting our committee and brand meetings telephonically. It has been working surprisingly well. Our next telephonic board meeting will be held on May 13" at 8:30am. As most of you don't have the opportunity to attend Board meetings I hope that you might take this opportunity to call in and listen to the meeting. Information on accessing the board meeting will be posted on our website or feel free to send an email to Maniena. She can forward the call in information to you directly.

want to thank all of you for your flexability in these challenging times. It is difficult to be disconnected from colleagues. A person that sits nearby that you can bounce ideas off or just have a chat. We will all get back to work soon with safety precautions in place to protect you and familie

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This message was sent with high important

COVID-19 Update

Good afternoon,

in an effort to ensure the health and safety of our staff and customers, we have decided to reduce staff at RiHousing's offices effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020. In addition, we will close the office beginning on Thursday, March 20, 2020. This closure will be in effect through March 31, 2020. We intend to reassess this closure on March 27" and will provide further guidance to you on our intention to remain closed or to reopen after March 31st.

While some staff will not be able to work during this closure, you have been identified as a staff member who will work from home to ensure we do not experience any disruptions to critical programs and services. It is expected that you will begin working from home starting Wednesday morning

in order to do so, please do the following to prepare for our closing:

Agency Update

Good morning

resplite these challenging times you all continue to provide the very best service to Rhode Islanders in need. Over the past two weeks, we have had n unprecedented number of calls from anxious customers and tenants with concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on their situation. For those of rou who are handling these calls, I appreciate your professionalism and patience as you provide guidance and direction on important housing needs. Thank you all for your hard work particularly as the daily news presents us with more dire statistics on the impact of COVID-19.

am happy to report that over the past two weeks we have conducted two important meetings telephonically. On March 25", the Trustees of the RHousing Affordable Housing Trust approved financing for two developments under our newly created Workforce Housing Innovation hallenge. The two developments are located in the City of Providence and will provide 38 affordable apartments for moderate incom ouseholds. In addition, the Trustees approved the creation of and \$400,000 in financing for the HomeSafe Program. This program will provide prants to households experience housing insecurity. Specifically, the grants will help a family make a rent payment, a mortgage payment or to pay an overdue utility bill. These program funds will be administered by our community partners.

On April 2", the Board of Commissioners conducted its meeting. The board approved financing for two multifamily rental developments. Financing

INFORMATION

Creation of helpful documents

RIHOUSING TELEWORKING TIPS

Here are some tips to help maximize your remote work experience:

- (1) Set and keep regular office hours. Most people who work from home find they work too much rather than too little. Other remote workers struggle to keep a regular schedule -working a few hours one day and pulling an all-nighter the next. One of the great things about being a remote worker is that you can set a schedule that works for you. Create a schedule that will allow you to get the most done with as few interruptions as possible. Don't forget to include appointments, meetings, and allow some time for unexpected interruptions. Some interruptions can't be avoided. Client deadlines may unexpectedly require extra hours. Family obligations can interfere as well, especially if children are home during the day. Do your best to set work hours and stick to them.
- (2) Plan and structure your work day. Structure your workday to maximize efficiency. If you know you focus best in the morning, resist the temptation to check email until 10 a.m. or later. A quick review of your calendar when you first start work can set you up for a productive workday. Make a list of your most important tasks before you move on to less urgent business. If possible, shut your office door (if you have one) to signal to others that you're working and don't wish to be disturbed (if possible).
- (3) Increased communications. Stay in touch during the workday through phone and/or email. You are expected to be available during business hours or the hours discussed with your supervisor.
- (4) Meetings. Employees must be available to attend scheduled meetings and participate in other required office activities at the home office, as needed. If you are required to have meetings with your team, clients, etc., make sure that you try to schedule everything to take place back-to-back, within the same time block. That way, you don't have to stop and start what you are doing to go from one meeting to another.
- (5) Set aside a designated work area. Consistency is an important aspect to working from home. Try to work at the same spot every day. It could be a spare bedroom that you've turned into a home office, a desk located in the corner of the living room or even the dining room table. Make sure your workspace functions efficiently for you, your business and your style.
- (6) Take breaks. Schedule time for frequent breaks throughout the day. Rise from your desk, stretch or walk around the house or down the street. Take a lunch break and enjoy a midday meal. If you need a little socializing, call co-workers or friends. If possible, spend time with

Remote work is new to RIHousing and its staff. To support staff as they embrace remote work, Human Resources developed a series of "Teleworking Tips," COVID Protocols and Procedures.

Creation of a Series of documents with important and timely COVID-19 related information for staff, including COVID-19 Policy, COVID-19 FAQs, Exposure Action Plan and more.



COVID-19 Policy (Updated 6/1/2020)

Purpose:

In response to increased cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019), the following policy establishes procedures for supporting employees who may be exposed to, infected with or impacted by COVID-19. The goal of this policy is to maintain a safe and healthy workplace, protect the privacy of infected persons, and let all employees know their rights in discharging leave and remote work options related to this disease. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act ("FFCRA") was recently signed into law and became effective as of April 1, 2020. FFCRA provides employees with paid sick or family leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. FFCRA's provisions will apply from the effective date through December 31, 2020. Further guidance on the FFCRA provisions



(Updated 6/8/2020)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) About RIHousing's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response

This FAQ provides information to employees of RIHousing regarding the workplace and COVID-19. This document serves as a supplement to RIHousing COVID-19 guidance and documentation. All employees must review in full the policies, procedures and protocols implemented by RIHousing (and located on the COVID-19 page on the RIHousing employee intranet) to ensure they have an understanding of the procedures to be followed involving the coronavirus and the workplace.

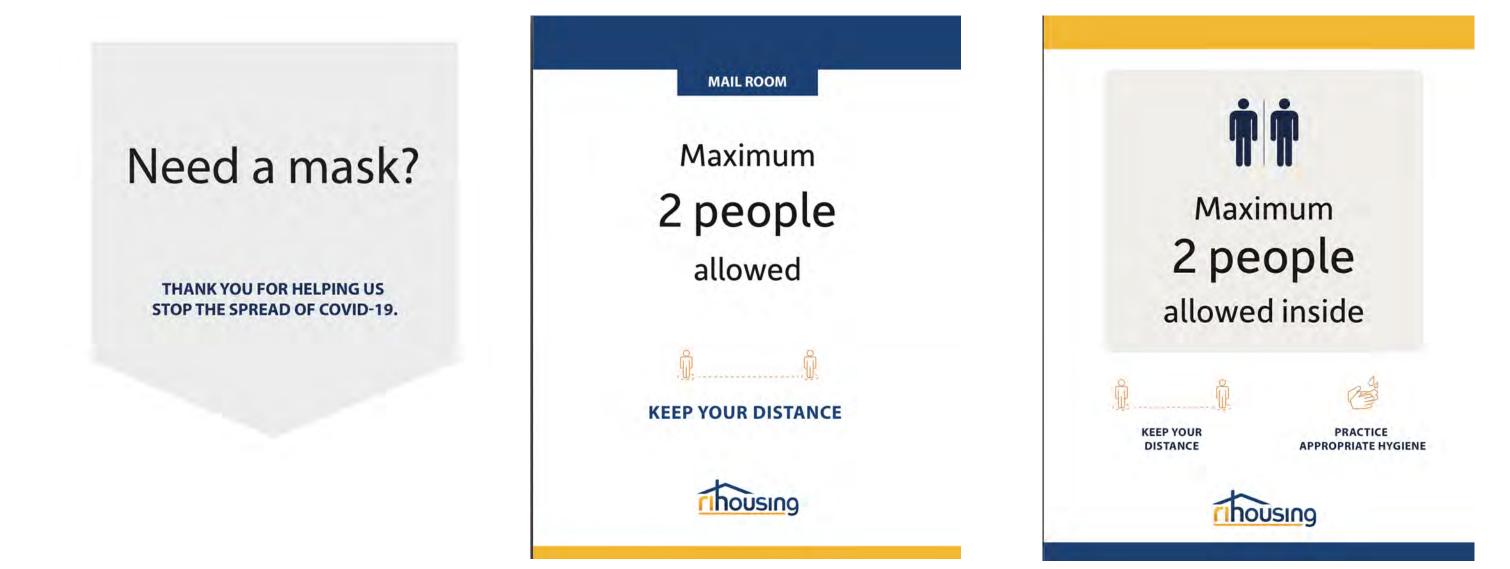






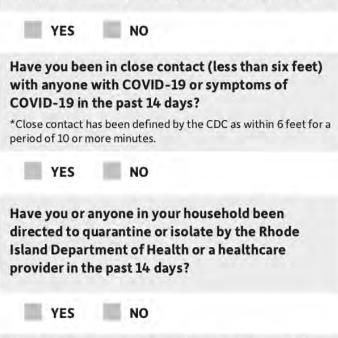
SIGNAGE

Creative and informative signage throughout the building as staff return to the office



ALL EMPLOYEES AND VISITORS MUST COMPLETE A HEALTH AND **TRAVEL SCREENING PRIOR TO ENTERING THE WORKPLACE.**

Have you been diagnosed positive with COVID-19?



Have you or anyone in your household traveled internationally in the past 14 days?

YES NO

In the past 14 days, have you traveled to Rhode Island for a non-work-related purpose from another city, town, county, or state that currently has a stay-at-home restriction, a shelter-in-place restriction, or a similar restriction, declaration, or announcement due to a COVID-19 outbreak?

Excluding travel for medical treatment, to attend funeral or memorial services, to obtain necessities like groceries, gas, or medication, to drop off or pick up children from day care, or work on your boat.

YES NO

Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the last three days that are not explained by known allergies or a non-infectious cause?

- Fever (of 100F or higher)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Recent loss of taste or smell

YES NO

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF **THESE QUESTIONS, PLEASE DO NOT** ENTER THE BUILDING.

FOR EMPLOYEES: CONTACT YOUR SUPERVISOR AND THE HUMAN **RESOURCES DIVISION AT** OR

FOR VENDORS AND VISITORS: PLEASE DO **NOT** ENTER THE BUILDING, YOU SHOULD **RESCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT.**



Thank you for helping us stop the spread of COVID-19.











EMPLOYEE SUPPORT

Information resources include policies and procedures updated to reflect the reopening of the state as well as important resources to promote employee health and well-being.

REMINDER: Coastline EAP	S.
To: RIH All Employees	Monday, April 6, 2020 at 3:03 PM
🖓 Download All 💿 Preview All	
Dear Colleagues,	
Reminder:	
	an through Coastline EAP. They are available to our employees and
We understand that this pandemic may o everyone that Coastline EAP is an option	cause anxious times for our employees and we want to remind for you.
Please be sure to contact them at 1-800	AAE-110E
Currently, Coastline is also offering free and registration for April.	Web 577472020 9077 AM
Thank you.	Coastline EAP - Take a Meditation or Yoga Break
Chair Yoga and Meditation (30 minutes) Many people find that doing simple yoga can enhance their meditation practice. Y need a yoga mat or yoga clothes, just a some comfortable clothing. See more inf	Good Morning, Coastline EAP has some great programs to help with stress and anxiety during this difficult time. Please see these great opportunities below. Also, remember they are available 24/7 for you and your family members. You can reach them at (800) 445-1195.
Register Wednesday, July 1st at 12:00 F Register Wednesday, July 1st at 5:00 Pt	Take a Meditation or Yoga Break
	Coastline EAP EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE FROM COAST TO COAST
	Looking For Ways To Cope With Stress And Anxiety?





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A series of emails promoting employee health and well-being ensure staff are fully supported during this challenging time

Supporting employees' fiscal health

You're Invited! Summer of 2020

RII lousing is pleased to provide you with another opportunity for a one-on-one discussion with Voya representatives to:

- Review your Voya Account
- **Review Voya Online Tools**
- Discuss Asset Allocation of Your Portfolio
- How you can increase or enroll in the 457(b) Plan

To Book an appointment, click below: https://timewithmyretirement.timetap.com

MARKAN CALLER MARKANA INTE

Financial Education Resources

Wednesday, April 29, 2020 at 10:27 AM

To: RIH All Employees

Dear Colleagues:

Please see the message and links below from Marsh McLennan, RIHousing's retirement plan financial advisor. They are offering 1-1 virtual sessions to you through the end of April and an upcoming virtual webinar on May 8th on the current market. If you are unable to participate in either of these opportunities now, we will be bringing more financial advisory resources for you in the future. Stay well.

Expanded Retirement Plan Education Resources

Over the last couple of months, COVID-19 has upended our lives. It has caused a lot of market volatility and created mass confusion for retirement plan participants. We have worked with our Plan's advisor, Marsh & McLennan Agency (MMA), to expand our education resources to help you better understand how to manage your account.

VIRTUAL 1-1 SESSIONS

Through the end of April, virtual 1-1 sessions with MMA's Education Consultants are available. This will give you the opportunity to speak with meone about your account. To sign up for a 1-1 session, click the link below and choose an available time that works for you:

https://mmawellness.as.me/retire

ARKET VOLATILITY WEBINARS

MMA has also been hosting frequent webinars that discuss the current market environment, COVID-19 and how to manage your individual account during periods of increased market volatility. The next webinar is scheduled for May 8, 2020. The registration link is below:

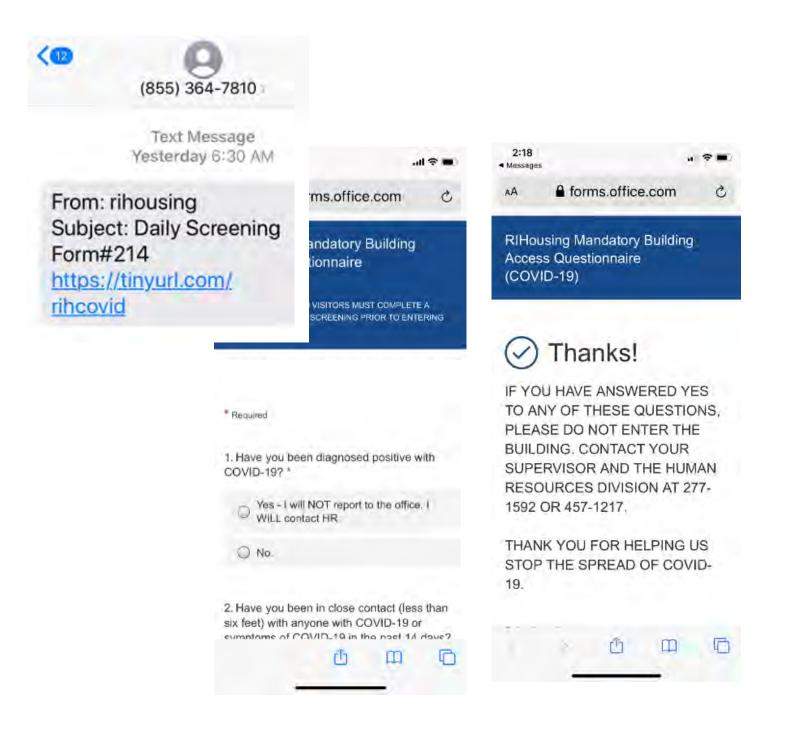
MAY 8, 2020 @ 1:00 PM (ET): <u>HTTPS://ATTENDEE.GOTOWEBINAR.COM/REGISTER/3622496494981806861</u>

Replays from previous weekly webinars are also available by visiting MMA's webinar library.

TECHNOLOGY

Screening App

The electronic screening app helps us keep staff safe and ensures employee privacy while complying with state guidelines.



Employees receive text and email reminders every day for the Daily Screening Form. The screening app is mobile friendly.

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THE WO	LOYEES AND VISITORS MUST COMPLETE A HEALTH AND TRAVEL SCREENING PRIOR TO ENTER RKPLACE.
ні	, when you submit this form, the owner will be able to see your name and email address.
* Requi	ed
1. Have	you been diagnosed positive with COVID-19? *
() i	es - I will NOT report to the office. I WILL contact HR.
• r	lo.
COV	e you been in close contact (less than six feet) with anyone with COVID-19 or symptor ID-19 in the past 14 days? se contact has been defined by the CDC as within 6 feet for a period of 10 or more mi
0 1	es - I will NOT report to the office. I WILL contact HR.
• r	lo.
3. Have	you or anyone in your household been directed to quarantine or isolate by the Rhode
	d Department of Health or a healthcare provider in the past 14 days? *

