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To: Emergency Operations Committee  
From: Adam Ydstie, Laura Miles, Hollie Swanson, Aaron Tripp  
Date: June 24, 2020  
Subject: Safety Plan for Public Facing THA Staff & Lobbies

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## **SAFETY PLAN FOR PUBLIC FACING THA STAFF & LOBBIES**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

Due to COVID-19, THA closed our doors to the public effective March 14, 2020, and all non-essential staff were set up to work from home immediately thereafter. COVID-19 is changing how we interact and how our offices will operate for the foreseeable future.

On May 1, 2020, the Governor's office outlined the state's four-phase approach to reopening businesses. This approach relies heavily on modifying physical distancing measures to allow society to re-open for people to interact safely. Physical distancing (of at least 6ft), use of face masks, and good hygiene will need to be followed even once all businesses/activities can operate without restrictions. Pierce County is now in Phase 2 (as of June 4, 2020) of the four phases.

The Public Facing Work Group has been tasked with addressing the following questions:

- How, and when does THA re-open our lobbies to visitors and guests?
- What modifications to policies, procedures, and physical space will need to occur?
- What IT tools do we need to augment?
- What staffing model do we need to implement for client-facing staff?

The following recommendations apply to all visitors, staff, and physical spaces at these locations:

- THA's main offices at 902 South L St.
- Bay Terrace Offices
- Family Investment Center – Salishan
- Smaller offices will address social distancing and some of the guidelines individually

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **2.1 General Re-opening of THA Lobbies**

Some THA staff and many of our clients are considered to be high risk or vulnerable populations. Therefore, this workgroup recommends that we do not open our lobbies to guests until after the suspected second wave of the virus has passed. We propose to open the lobbies in stages (See Appendix A – Safety Plan Matrix). First, we would open by appointment only. Next, we would begin taking walk-ins during limited hours and would also limit the number of people in the lobby. This will be determined by the square footage of each lobby and the guidance given by the local and state health departments.

In addition to social distancing requirements, we will require that all guests, as well as staff interacting in close proximity to guests, wear facemasks or a cloth face-covering unless either party requests an accommodation. All visitors will also be required to hand sanitize.

Regarding face coverings, the CDC recommends you wear cloth face-covering in public settings if social distance measures can't be maintained. They state that a mask is an extra layer of protection and isn't a substitute for social distancing or handwashing.

We will ask that visitors verify they have an appointment (only during the appointment only stage), complete a basic health check, and log their visit using a tablet to assist THA with contact tracing should the need arise.

## **2.2 Client Engagement**

By limiting the way we re-open our lobbies, we recognize this may be challenging for some clients who need in-person assistance. We have also found that many clients are appreciative that we've already implemented some tools to limit the number of times they need to come in to THA offices to conduct business. Our proposal to minimize client visits to our lobbies is reliant on increasing the capacity for meaningful client engagement through the use of technology. THA's IT staff and this workgroup are currently evaluating several software options to aid in this engagement. These tools will meet the following criteria to mitigate barriers and limit the number of reasons we require clients to visit us in person. These tools will:

- not require the installation of additional software on client devices
- be as user friendly as possible
- be mobile friendly so that clients can use a phone instead of a computer since over 50% of visitors to our website are on a mobile device and that number was nearly 70% for the recent waitlist opening
- be accessible for people with disabilities
- include translation tools for clients whose native language is not English
- provide a secure way to meet virtually and share private documents
- include the ability to e-sign documents that require signatures
- not be a fiscal impact beyond THA's current budget.

Staff will offer virtual ways of meeting with clients for the foreseeable future. However, when clients must visit our offices because of their stated needs or the requirements of some of our programs, we will first welcome clients by appointment only. In subsequent phases, we will welcome walk-in guests. However, we will limit the number of people waiting in the lobby based on that lobby's capacity to comply with social distancing requirements. Due to this need, we recommend that appointments be limited to only those individuals who are required to attend and request in-person support.

## **2.3 Modifications to Physical Spaces**

There is an abundance of guidance from the state and local health departments to create a safe space for our clients and our staff. Using this guidance, we are making the following recommendations regarding the re-design of our lobby spaces.

- Have Property Management install Plexiglas barriers at front desks and in carrels, ensure multiple contactless hand sanitizer dispensers are readily available at each entrance and procure and install social distancing cues on the floor and bench seating as well as remove furniture as needed
- Have IT decrease the number of computer stations in each lobby and replace with tablets pre-loaded with THA forms and documents
- Have each department increase health awareness and precautions signage in the lobbies they are responsible for using the guidance and signage from the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department

The fiscal impact of these changes has yet to be defined. Property Management and IT are in the process of developing estimates for this work in partnership with this workgroup.

## **2.4 Modifications to Policies and Procedures**

Some minor changes to existing policies, procedures, and culture will need to occur within the context of this work.

### *2.4.1 Increased Cleaning & Sanitization Requirements*

We recommend that each lobby close midday for deep cleaning and then a scheduled cleaning right after the lobby closes. Hand sanitizers will be installed inside each lobby entrance and guests will be asked to sanitize before approaching.

### *2.4.2 Paperwork & Document Requirements*

The work of digitizing documents has already begun and must continue within each department. We recommend allowing e-signatures for all document types. Pursuant to Chapter 19.34 RCW, electronic signatures are valid in Washington State. However, agencies must obtain electronic signatures through a licensed certification authority. The state has not maintained an updated list of licensed certification authorities, so THA will need to work to identify which vendors are approved in Washington.

This effort will minimize the amount of physical paperwork passed around the office and will, therefore, minimize exposure not only to the virus but also help protect sensitive information. Using already available technology options like Formsite or DocuSign, forms, and documents that are currently in paper format should be put online. Tablet kiosks should be made available when the lobbies reopen to submit forms as well as scan or upload paperwork.

## **2.5 Staffing Model**

Other reopening workgroup proposals have included recommendations for staffing for non-client facing staff. For staff who must be in the office for tasks related to their work or in order to best interact with customers, this workgroup has the following recommendation:

- During Stages 1 – 3, on-site staff will initially limit their time in the office to a maximum of 50% of their hours.
- In Stage 4, staff will increase office time to a maximum of 75% of their work hours
- Staff will be scheduled on an A/B rotation at their department’s discretion
- All staffing schedules will ensure equal days in and out of the office for all staff over a two-week period.
- When developing schedules managers should consider social distancing requirements and ensure they are met while in effect according to state guidelines.
- Staff that have traveled recently should consult the general Safety Plan as well as confer with their supervisor for guidance.



**APPENDIX A – PUBLIC FACING SAFETY PLAN MATRIX**

|   | <b>STAGE ONE</b><br>Date: Current  | <b>STAGE TWO</b><br>Date: TBD (July?)   | <b>STAGE THREE</b><br>Date: TBD (After 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wave)   | <b>STAGE FOUR</b><br>Date: TBD (New Normal)   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Reopening Lobby Spaces to the Public</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobbies continue to be closed</li> <li>Continue temporary operations</li> <li>Improve client engagement using technology (see below)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobbies continue to be closed</li> <li>Begin work to redesign lobby spaces – see below</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-open lobby spaces by appointment only – closed midday for cleaning</li> <li>Limit # of guests inside per WA Dept. Of Health guidance</li> <li>Masks required</li> <li>Hand sanitizing required</li> <li>Health check &amp; sign-in required</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-open lobby spaces with limited hours – closed midday for cleaning</li> <li>Limit # of guests inside per WA Dept. Of Health guidance</li> <li>Masks required</li> <li>Hand sanitizing required</li> <li>Health check &amp; sign-in required</li> </ul> |
| <b>Redesign of Public Facing Space</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of Plexiglas shields</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of furniture</li> <li>Downsize computers</li> <li>Social distancing visual cues installed</li> <li>Stanchions installed</li> </ul>           |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional furniture returned if need be</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Client Engagement</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue meeting with clients on phone and virtual meetings</li> <li>Utilize DocuSign – begin uploading templates</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin scheduling virtual “face to face meetings” using Teams &amp; scheduling software</li> <li>Document sharing using Teams or ShareFile</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer clients the option to meet in person or virtually</li> <li>Client encouraged to wait outside until notified that staff are ready for them instead of checking-in inside lobbies</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to offer clients the option to meet in person or virtually</li> </ul>   |

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|--|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Technology Needs</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Digitize documents project</li> <li>▪ Order tablets/kiosks</li> <li>▪ Evaluate appointment &amp; booking software</li> <li>▪ Public facing Teams ability</li> <li>▪ Test &amp; evaluate document sharing systems</li> <li>▪ Update Formsite forms</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Digitizing documents complete</li> <li>▪ All templates in DocuSign</li> <li>▪ Testing of scheduling software</li> <li>▪ Install tablets/kiosks</li> </ul>  |  |  |
| <b>PPE &amp; Safety Equipment Needed</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue procurement policies established for PPE equipment in the Continuity of Operations Plan.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contactless hand sanitizer stations installed in all lobbies &amp; public spaces</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure masks &amp; hand sanitizer are re-stocked regularly at each public lobby</li> <li>▪ Regular cleaning of lobby</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure masks &amp; hand sanitizer are re-stocked regularly at each public lobby</li> <li>▪ Scheduled cleaning of lobby</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Staffing Model</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daily staffing at 25-50% maximum – split shifts, working from home - each department will assign staff A/B schedules based on need – social distancing must remain</li> <li>▪ See General Safety Plan for additional staffing guidance</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daily staffing at –25-50% maximum – split shifts, working from home Daily staffing at 50% maximum – split shifts, working from home - each department will assign staff A/B schedules based on need – social distancing must remain</li> <li>▪ See General Safety Plan for additional staffing guidance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daily staffing at 25-50% maximum – split shifts, working from home - each department will assign staff A/B schedules based on need – social distancing must remain</li> <li>▪ See General Safety Plan for additional staffing guidance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daily staffing up to 75% maximum – split shifts, working from home - each department will assign staff A/B schedules based on need – social distancing must remain</li> <li>▪ See General Safety Plan for additional staffing guidance</li> </ul> |
| <b>Communication with Public</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Design signage for lobbies and social distancing cues on floors, stanchions. Etc.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Install signage in lobbies</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public statement coordinated by the Communications Manager</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Updated public statement coordinated by the Communications Manager</li> </ul>   |

**APPENDIX A – PUBLIC FACING SAFETY PLAN MATRIX**

June 23, 2020