

From: [Jeffrey Thielman](#)
To: [AllStaff](#)
Subject: Update on remote work at IINE
Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 5:10:25 PM

Dear Colleagues:

Yesterday Governor Baker extended Massachusetts' stay-at-home order for non-essential workers through Monday, May 18. We have yet to hear from Governor Sununu in New Hampshire, but, regardless of his decision, **IINE will continue to keep all three of our offices closed to in-person services and will continue remote work through at least May 18.**

As a human services provider, IINE is an essential business, but we can and are providing most of our services remotely. Yesterday's email from Xan highlighting the program data makes it clear that, even remotely, our programs continue to have an impact on the health and well-being of our clients. I am amazed and impressed with the work everyone is doing from home!

The Directors and Executive Leadership Team meet for an hour each week to discuss multiple matters, including what a staged return to in-person work would look like at IINE. We continue to follow the advice of state leaders in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, but all that we are reading tells us that **social distancing restrictions and remote work will continue for an extended period.**

Many of you may be wondering what a gradual return to work at IINE might look like. Our role as an essential business means that, under certain circumstances and in order to continue providing essential administrative or direct services, you or your colleagues may need to come to the office or travel in your community. However, the majority of our staff will continue their work from home. In the coming months, as more in-person work in our region resumes, some people may start working from the offices, but we may implement restrictions on the number of people that can be in an IINE office at any given time.

As it currently stands, anyone who believes they need to visit an IINE office or meet with someone for IINE business is required to gain approval from their Director, complete [our Wufoo form](#), and observe our safety protocols. As a reminder, there are now masks and gloves available at each site, and we encourage anyone approved to meet others in-person to take advantage of this PPE. The Directors and Leadership team will be wearing masks whenever we are at the offices.

While the Leadership team is thinking through when and how staff will return onsite, we have also started a conversation around the protocols and equipment IINE will need to put in place for clients and other visitors. For our education programming, we will await guidance from both states on precautions we should take before permitting students in our classrooms.

The bottom line is that we are not going to transition everyone back to office-based work anytime soon, and we will not do so until we are able to meet all of the guidelines established by both New Hampshire and Massachusetts. My strong sense is that we are going to be working in the current format for much longer than May 18.

For those who have to come to our offices, effective immediately IINE will pay your parking or

Uber/Lyft fees. We will limit this reimbursement for office-related travel to a two-times per week maximum per person. Permission to travel and work from the office remains subject to your Director's approval, and a reimbursement form should be submitted within 45 days. Thank you in advance for practicing social distancing, good hand hygiene, and careful use of the supplied protective equipment. I am thankful to be part of a team that cares for their health and the health of their colleagues.

I also want to address anyone on the IINE team who is parenting or caring for family members during this crisis. For those of us with kids, this is a really rough time. Schools and daycares are closed, most camps appear to be closing this summer, and many of us are finding that remote instruction is not meeting our children's needs and is difficult to monitor. Our kids have essentially lost one-third of a year of their schooling, they are missing their friends, and trying to keep them engaged and happy is itself a full-time job.

Please do what you need to do to take care of yourself, your children, and your family. We have asked each supervisor to be sensitive to the challenges parents and caregivers are facing, and that they allow anyone caring for loved ones a flexible work schedule. I have checked with several staff, and most are finding they have to work during nap times and after bedtime. Thank you for this extraordinary effort. I certainly appreciate the challenges of trying to take care of others while doing your job every day.

Please know your supervisor will work with you to come up with a solution that supports your situation – whether you are parenting, taking care of aging parents, or supporting a partner. As a reminder, please reach out to Shayne if you have any questions about the additional time off options made available through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

We all need to put our families first. Knowing I will not be home until late tonight because we have a Board meeting (by GoToMeeting), I took a good part of this morning to be with my family, including a 90-minute baseball workout with my 10-year-old son. In case you are wondering, I can hit pop flies with the best of them!

Every situation at home is different, but I hope each of you is finding ways to spend the quality time you need with your family.

Thank you for all you continue to do for our clients, and please keep taking care of yourselves.

Gratefully,
Jeff

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