Partner Update Summary: OSO October 2020

During our recent Partner meeting, all of our partner agencies agreed that the positive impact resulting from the COVID pandemic was that everyone stepped up to the challenge and remained positive. Working remotely, applying creative solutions to service delivery, maintaining a positive staff culture and solving technology challenges for our clients are all areas highlighted.

It is not surprising that while the response has been both effective and positive, all agencies are showing some signs of COVID fatigue. Uncertainty regarding the anticipated return to normal operations and moreover, normal life continues to weigh on staff and management alike.

***Partners:***

College of Dupage: Has additional laptops for students to check out if unable to attend classes remotely. The college has seen approximately 9% drop in registration, mostly in older adult students but many colleges throughout the state have seen in excess of 20% drops. Face to face learning, counseling and assessments have returned but one a limited basis. Additional remote sites are being used to help facilitate services when available.

CAPs & National Able: Senior Community Service Employment Programs have been returned to 20-hours per week but do to the higher risk of these clients there are 1) fewer employers allowing them to return to work. 2) Employees that are unwilling to return for fear of contracting COVID may remain at home without penalty 3) Directive has been given that no new clients can be added until January, 2021.

Dept. Rehabilitation Services (DRS): Continue to work remotely and while referrals have been slow, performance has seen a slight increase. Note: by January 1st they will have three openings as counselors have announced their intentions to leave; some if not all retiring. Counselors all have office issued cell phones now for official business.

Dept. of Human Services (DHS): Continue to have staff reporting to office on staggered schedules and following CDC guidelines. Clients continue to be served remotely and through personal delivery of paperwork and referrals at their locations while remaining in the parking lot. Orientation is done 1-on-1 which takes additional time but is very affective. Production remains high and the increase experienced with remote service continues.

Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES): IDES continues to provide services remotely and offices will remain closed until further notice. The general feeling is that they will experience a heavy demand in January, 2021 and are bracing for this influx on January 1st. Security remains a concern for them and for us regarding Unemployment Insurance claims that may be sought at the Lisle office.

**Referrals:** Referring clients has remained consistent but numbers have slowed a bit. All partners continue to look for collaboration opportunities with other partner agencies and are sharing program, business updates and job listing information regularly.

**Business Services**: The regional Business Service meeting was cancelled this month but locally our teams continue to perform wellness checks and add new job opportunities. Dupage County Business Services and IDES continue to show large demands for both entry/survival jobs and higher level career opportunities with WDD having over 10 pages of job leads and IDES ranging from the high 60,000 to the mid 70,000 active job opening.