

# Responding to a Pandemic

On March 9, 2020 Governor Gina Raimondo issued a state of emergency in Rhode Island in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. On March 13, 2020 Tri-County released its first notice to employees and staff outlining a plan of action to assist in the response, and to be prepared to meet the inevitable rise of need within the communities we serve. We responded quickly, efficiently and most important, safely. Our efforts to respond to the crisis are ongoing, and we remain committed to assessing the needs of the individuals and families we serve. **As of January 15, 2021 Tri-County has tested over 3,000 individuals for the COVID-19 virus. Roughly 20% of testing performed by Tri-County CAA resulted in positive cases.**

## March, 2020

Implemented employee and client safety precautions, remote work schedules, social distancing guidelines, and sanitation procedures in all buildings. Began offering telemedicine appointments for medical and behavioral health patients

## April, 2020

Provided chrome books to students enrolled in Employment & Training programs to continue their classes remotely. Transitioned WIC, Senior & Disabled Adult, VOCA, tax, and Weatherization programs to phone visits and assessments.

## May, 2020

Opened COVID-19 drive through testing site. Received \$625,000 in CARES Act funding to respond to needs as a result of the pandemic. Established a safe location to offer prenatal and well child checkups. Expanded food bank access and supplies. Senior & Disabled Adult program began distributing food/supply boxes to elderly clients. Received \$200,000 COVID-19 Behavioral Health Fund Grant from the RI Foundation.



## June, 2020

A multi-phased approach to re-opening the Agency was created. Tri-County implemented strict employee screening and workplace disinfecting protocols in preparation of phase I reopening. Weatherization and LIHEAP programs prepared to offer digital application processes to minimize in-person appointments for the upcoming fall and winter application season.

## July, 2020

Tri-County begins immunization campaign to encourage parents to keep children up-to-date on their immunizations, following state guidance. Tri-County partners with Dorcas International and the RI Foundation to collect applications for weR1 Fund, which provides assistance to undocumented individuals who have lost income as a result of COVID-19. Tri-County receives \$110,000 from NHPRI to assist with COVID response.

## August, 2020

Tri-County staff complete training on Housing Help RI with Crossroads, a program that addresses the increased need for housing assistance. Tri-County celebrates National Health Center Week and recognizes the outstanding efforts of staff to offer medical, behavioral health and dental care safely while continuing to offer on-site COVID testing. Tri-County receives an additional \$75,000 COVID-19 Response Fund grant from the RI Foundation.

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## September, 2020

Tri-County receives grant funding to establish a Health Equity Zone (HEZ) in the towns of Johnston, North Providence and Smithfield. The HEZ program proposes to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Received additional CARES Act funding to address the ongoing needs of clients and patients as a result of the pandemic. Employment & Training program offers remote GED and Teacher Assistant training.

## October, 2020

New guidelines for contact tracing are implemented throughout the Agency. The Tri-County HEZ program provides COVID-19 kits, guidance and educational materials to community partners and residents about celebrating holidays safely. Tri-County Health Center prepares to open a respiratory clinic in North Providence, and flu clinics have started at both health center locations.



## November, 2020

Volunteers from the Tri-County Health Center assemble and distribute over 500 Thanksgiving baskets for families in need. The Tri-County Community Action Agency Respiratory Clinic opens in North Providence.

## December, 2020

The Tri-County HEZ hosted several BINAX Now rapid testing clinics for COVID-19. Hundreds of individuals and children were tested. Tri-County opens COVID-10 mobile testing site at Johnston High Scholl in collaboration with the Town of Johnston, and the Johnston School Committee.



## January, 2021

Tri-County Community Action Agency begins vaccination of health center staff, and begins campaign to educate patients and the community of the importance and safety of the COVID-19 vaccine.