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Correspondence Memorandum

Date: March 10, 2021
To: Employee Trust Funds Board
Teachers Retirement Board
Wisconsin Retirement Board
From: Pam Henning, Assistant Deputy Secretary
Subject: COVID-19 Pandemic Update

This memo is for informational purposes only. No Board action is required.

As reported at our board meetings in 2020, almost all Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) staff have been working from home (WFH) since March 17 in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. About 20-25 staff continue reporting to ETF's physical offices daily, providing essential business functions such as mail services, scanning and indexing retirement and other benefit related documents, preparing and printing retirement estimate information for members, and ensuring checks to members and vendors are distributed timely.

ETF's physical offices at the Hill Farms State Office Building (HFSOB) continue to remain closed to the public and our members. ETF's daily operations and services continue to thrive, with remote staff efficiently providing customer service, education, and application or transaction processing. All retirement appointments are being conducted virtually or over-the-phone. In December, we began offering one weekly evening group appointment that has been well received by our members unable to book daytime appointments.

We continue to track daily work status of all ETF staff via a Morning Report from supervisors. The daily Morning Report allows us to monitor staffing levels, track illnesses, and implement changes to onsite protocols if COVID-19-related exposure occurs.

Board	Mtg Date	Item #
EXC	3.24.21	3A
JM	3.25.21	4E

ETF's Bounce Back Plan

As you're aware, ETF's Bounce Back Plan went into effect in May 2020 and outlines three phases for returning to work at Hill Farms. ETF has remained in Phase 1, which limits only essential staff onsite while all other staff WFH. Since May, we have extended our Bounce Back Plan twice in response to increased positive COVID-19 cases, new variant concerns, and based upon guidance from state and local health officials.

Department of Administration guidance and Dane County Public Health standards have recently relaxed some restrictions on general office space capacity. By April 5, state government buildings will begin opening for essential services only as determined by each agency up to 10% of pre-pandemic levels and with appropriate COVID-19 mitigation measures in place.

We continue to prioritize the health and safety of our members and ETF staff, and as illustrated in other agency operational reports, WFH is meeting the service needs of Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) members. As a result, ETF's Bounce Back Plan will remain at Phase 1 until July 1, 2021. We will certainly modify our Plan if vaccine distribution and information from public health officials on statewide immunity indicates it is safe to do so. At that time, we will work towards a slow transition for staff and our members to return to the office. Our decision will be guided by current restrictions, new information from health experts on vaccine distribution, impact on the health and safety of our staff and members, and the continued ability to successfully provide services to our members while staff WFH.

ETF Future Hybrid Work Model

As mentioned in the December Board report, a Future Work Model Workgroup was created last fall with a cross-section of agency expertise to brainstorm and research how a future hybrid work model could provide flexibility and accountability, maintain ETF's strong culture, and meet the needs of our members and employers while reaching our strategic goals and performance metrics. The Workgroup, in coordination with the Continuity of Operations Plan Team, is gathering feedback from all staff on future remote work options and availability to determine the best options to transition staff back to the office while providing flexibility to continue WFH in part-time or full-time capacities and serving our members with both onsite and virtual choices. The workgroup will present its final recommendations to leadership for consideration in the coming months.

I will be available at the Board meeting to answer questions.

Attachment: ETF Bounce Back Plan

ETF's Bounce Back Plan

(Revised 2/2/2021)

ETF is implementing a gradual plan for returning to the workplace, which includes a multi-phased approach similar to the Governor's [Badger Bounce Back](#) plan but specific to ETF's business needs. The phases of ETF's plan detailed below are unique to ETF's needs and may not align directly with the State plan which moves from one phase to the next.

Phase I: ~~June 1, 2020 through July 1, 2021~~ ~~April 1, 2021~~ ~~December 31, 2020~~ ~~September 7, 2020 (Labor Day weekend)~~, is the most stringent and restrictive in terms of the number of employees allowed onsite and includes requirements for social distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning standards, travel restrictions, etc. ETF will allow for only those staff (up to 50 maximum agency-wide) that either provide onsite essential services or agree to work onsite as approved by their supervisor (due to productivity and/or morale, WFH restrictions, other).

Phase II: ~~September 8, 2020 through December 31, 2020~~, Will allow for more ETF staff to return to the office but limits onsite capacity for all three floors to about one-third of all ETF staff (~125 total). Social distancing, PPE, cleaning and other restrictions will still apply as documented in the chart below.

Phase III: ~~Beginning January 1, 2021~~ Through implementation of a COVID-19 treatment (e.g. vaccine) or other medical guidance that provides the safest return possible to the workplace and resumption of near normal business activity and public contact. This will allow more ETF staff to return to the office but limits onsite capacity for all three floors to about 50% capacity overall and per floor (~170 to 190 total).

The chart below summarizes the evolution of how ETF's pandemic response will be managed throughout each phase. This document provides general awareness, guidance, and expectations related to proper hygiene protocols and operations throughout the return-to-work process. The information is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), and other sources as of the date published and subject to change as that guidance is updated.

Please note that the dates for the phases are initial estimates and may need to be adjusted based on the progression of the COVID-19 virus and further medical recommendations to ensure health and safety. Movement from one phase to another will typically occur as COVID-19 gating criteria (as established by the Badger Bounce Back Plan) are met or more accessible treatment and testing options are made available. All phases are subject to change depending on available treatment and testing options and guidance from federal and state government health experts/authorities.

Action	PHASE ONE	PHASE TWO	PHASE THREE
Wash hands often (20 seconds); cover cough	Yes	Yes	Yes
Don't report to work if ill (fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, body aches, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, or loss of smell/taste)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Surface and object cleaning	Yes	Yes	Yes
Increased availability of sanitizers & wipes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Physical distancing to 6 feet when possible (includes conference rooms, common areas)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allow gatherings (meetings, conference room use)	No - Use video conferencing	Yes-based on posted capacity per 6 feet social distancing per room (10 persons max); use of video conferencing highly recommended	Yes-based on posted capacity per 6 feet social distancing per room (10 persons max); use of video conferencing recommended
Movement between floors within ETF Suite	Limited – remain on floor of your cube/office	Limited – remain on floor of your cube/office unless necessary to meet on another ETF floor	Yes – use 6 feet social distancing guidelines
<u>Face mask required at work</u> (Common areas defined as elevators, kitchenettes, restrooms, conference rooms, lobbies)	Yes – at all times within the HFSOB and ETF space (except closed office)	Yes – in/out of HFSOB; in common areas within ETF suite	Yes – public facing; optional all others in common areas
Business travel restrictions	Yes – no travel	Essential in-state only	Essential in-state only
Quarantine of travelers from high-prevalence areas (as defined by the CDC/DHS)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public facing government services	No – use video conferencing	No – high priority service exceptions only	Yes, with public facing restrictions
Open state office buildings for general business	No – ETF onsite services only	Yes - HFSOB to public No – ETF onsite services	Yes, with public facing restrictions
State offices available to employees	Onsite-essential employees & others as approved by ETF supervisor	Yes, but limited number of ETF staff (about 1/3 capacity); WFH encouraged	Yes, but limited to about 50% capacity agency-wide and per floor; WFH encouraged
Daily Morning Reports Continue	Yes	Yes	Yes