

Questions from March 30, 2020

Facebook Live

Thanks to everyone who sent us questions and concerns from our first Facebook Live. We have consolidated the questions and posted answers to the best of our ability., as circumstances change, some of the answers may also change. We know there are still many questions about employment that are still being worked on by HRD. We will post more questions and answers as they become available from reliable sources. Yawe

- Michelle Marie Doxtator
 - Will the departments that are 100% grant funded and currently considered critical be allowed to remain operating because there will be a huge influx of people who will be needing service?
 - Jacqueline Ninham
 - I am also concerned about grant funded positions! Will the tribe renew some of our grant applications that are coming up for renewal? As a substance use coordinator specifically for opioids we still have higher rates of abuse and overdoses within our Native communities.
 - ANSWER - All grants, new or renewals, will be reviewed critically. Tier V Budget Contingency means implementing emergency cuts to all expenses for all non-critical areas. Critical functions of government and infrastructure are those activities aimed to protect the Continuity of Government (Continuity of Government is defined as the established or defined procedures that allow a government to continue its essential operations during and after an emergency or catastrophic event.) and the life, health, safety, and welfare of our employees and the community and include the following areas:
 - Oneida Anna John Resident Centered Care Community
 - Oneida Child/Day Care Departments
 - Oneida Comprehensive Health Division
 - Oneida Department of Public Works
 - Oneida Emergency Management
 - Oneida Internal Security Department
 - Oneida Management Information Systems
 - Oneida Police Department
 - Oneida Retail Enterprise Division
 - Oneida Surveillance Department
 - Oneida Tribal School System

- Elyssa Hawk
 - What about following grant funded programs and what those board say on how to continue using their funds? Such as Headstart.
 - ANSWER - All grants, new or renewals, will be reviewed critically. Tier V Budget Contingency means implementing emergency cuts to all expenses for all non-critical areas. Critical functions of government and infrastructure are those activities aimed to protect the Continuity of Government (Continuity of Government is defined as the established or defined procedures that allow a government to continue its essential operations during and after an emergency or catastrophic event.) and the life, health, safety, and welfare of our employees and the community and include the following areas:
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 - Oneida Retail Enterprise Division
 - Oneida Surveillance Department
 - Oneida Tribal School System

- Powl Schlass
 - I want to use my vacation/personal time. How do I do this?
 - ANSWER – Consult with your supervisor. For all employees, communication with your supervisor is essential. If your supervisor is not providing adequate communication, please reach out to the next level of management and notify them of the situation. If you need assistance on identifying that next level of management, contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 920-869-4481 or covid-19@oneidanation.org for assistance.

- Lame Angel
 - Since Cannabis is considered essential medicine in legal states can we use this time to push for legalization? What could we do to help as this is a billion-dollar industry when things start to open up, we can make up for money lost during this time?
 - ANSWER – At this point, the Nation is in active emergency management status, including mitigation and recovery. This suggestion has been forwarded to the Economic Development Area for consideration.

- Yvonne M. Kaquatosh
 - Is our time off from work extended now since the stay at home rule from the governor took effect?
 - ANSWER – Yes; the Nation’s Safer at Home Declaration and the Nation’s extended Public Health State of Emergency are in effect until May 12, 2020, unless otherwise notified by your supervisor. Communication with your supervisor is essential. If your supervisor is not providing adequate communication, please reach out to the next level of management and notify them of the situation. If you need assistance on identifying that next level of management, contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 920-869-4481 or covid-19@oneidanation.org for assistance.

- Pauline Butler
 - Are casino employees going back to work soon?
 - ANSWER – Under the Nation’s Safer at Home Declaration and the Nation’s extended Public Health State of Emergency, which is in effect until May 12, 2020, Gaming Facilities are not considered an essential business as they do not provide an essential service. However, as one of our most important revenue sources, we hope to recover our gaming operations as soon as possible in a safe environment. Communication with your supervisor is essential. If your supervisor is not providing adequate communication, please reach out to the next level of management and notify them of the situation. If you need assistance on identifying that next level of management, contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 920-869-4481 or covid-19@oneidanation.org for assistance.

- Dani Patterson
 - Will we still have medical coverage as nontribal member and will we still get a paycheck or are we going to be laid off
 - ANSWER – Payroll checks will end when an employee is placed in layoff status, but employees are eligible to apply for unemployment compensation. Healthcare insurance will end when an employee is placed in layoff status, but employees are eligible to apply for COBRA. Information will be provided to employees from Benefit Advantage, the company which administers the program.

- Joseph Jourdan
 - We can't close at the Oneida Food Distribution so I'm staying working and we deliver food to people so if it gets worse will we just have to stop delivering?
 - ANSWER – Changes, if any, will be made by management in consultation with the General Manager. Communication with your supervisor is essential. If your supervisor is not providing adequate communication, please reach out to the next level of management and notify them of the situation. If you need assistance on identifying that next level of management, contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 920-869-4481 or covid-19@oneidanation.org for assistance.

- Linda Torres
 - Can you find out what will be done with elder meal deliveries? I tried calling today & got VM from Eli (I believe). He stated he'd call back. No call back.
 - ANSWER – The meal site has been busy preparing meals and organizing delivery. Messages are being taken down and calls will be returned. Thank you for your patience.

- Jamie Betters
 - Can we open up Thornberry?
 - ANSWER – Golf Courses are not considered essential and will remain closed until the expiration of the Nation’s Safe at Home declaration; although, Thornberry Creek at Oneida does offer carry out from the restaurant during this time. The Nation is looking at all possible options to open the golf course; however, any decision will be done in accordance with the health and safety of employees, customers and the general public.
- Jodi Ann Mejia
 - At what point does an individual go in for medical care if they have "symptoms"? Why would you want them to stay home and quarantine if they possibly have Covid19 and potentially infect others at home
 - ANSWER – Any person who believes they have been exposed or have symptoms of COVID-19 should contact their health care provider for guidance or questions. For all other questions, we encourage all individuals to visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>.
- Naomi Kempainen
 - I do not have access to my work email since I am only working one day a week. What is the best way to get this communication at home?
 - Laura Elizabeth
 - Naomi--I would recommend reaching out to your supervisor to see what your communication options are. Also, follow the Oneida Nation Facebook page.
 - ANSWER – Access to email is available online at: <https://login.microsoftonline.com/>. Contact the MIS Help Desk for assistance at 920-869-4357.
- Rae Skenandore
 - As an employee, will we still have access to our email communications when layoffs occur? If not, how are you communicating to your employees during that time?
 - ANSWER – When an employee is placed on layoff status, access to their assigned work email is not available. Instructions will be provided to employees about maintaining current contact information on file with the Human Resources Department.
- Pamela Allen
 - Will you be able to help Any of the families off of the Rez
 - ANSWER - The Oneida Nation provides support through a variety of programs and services and eligibility requirements vary depending on the program and situation. The resources tab on the Nation’s website: www.oneida-nsn.gov is where you can find information on what programs and services are offered. Depending on what is needed, local, state, and federal programs may exist. Contact your local Department of Health and Human Services for additional information.
- Jennifer Jordan
 - If there were questions submitted over the weekend, why the wait to answer them?
 - ANSWER – this was the first FB Live event held on the COVID-19 topic and the goal is to be as inclusive as possible for all questions and responses. By facilitating a process which coordinates all Q & A for each event, we can better ensure all questions are being answered. Your suggestion is appreciated and will be reviewed for future events.

- Heather Denny
 - What about essential employees that are currently off for covid19 reasons?
 - ANSWER – Communication with your supervisor is essential. If your supervisor is not providing. If your Supervisor is not providing adequate information, please reach out to your next level of management and notify them of the situation. If you need assistance identifying the next level of management, contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 920-869-4481 or email at covid-19@oneidanation.org for assistance.

- Melissa Koehler-Alvarado
 - Will I still have a job?
 - ANSWER – The maximum layoff period is 26 weeks. If an employee is recalled within the layoff period, continuous service remains intact for all purposes except for the accumulation of benefits (i.e. health/life insurance) during the layoff period. If an employee is not recalled within the layoff period, employment is terminated.

- Michelle Marie Doxtator
 - Will the nation be able to change the policy for withdrawing from our 401 K? Right now we are only able to withdraw for specific reasons such as medical bills, tuition and house down payments or repairs.
 - ANSWER – This suggestion has been reviewed by the Finance Team; currently there are no recommendations to change the existing with drawl requirements.

- Joseph Skenandore
 - Is anybody reading the comments That is recording?
 - ANSWER – Yes, the comments have been reviewed and are published as a Frequently Asked Questions document.

- Joseph Skenandore
 - Is the casino going to be opening?
 - ANSWER – Under the Nation’s Safer at Home Declaration and the Nation’s extended Public Health State of Emergency, which is in effect until May 12, 2020, Gaming Facilities are not considered an essential business as they do not provide an essential service. However, as one of our most important revenue sources, we hope to recover our gaming operations as soon as possible in a safe environment. Communication with your supervisor is essential. If your supervisor is not providing adequate communication, please reach out to the next level of management and notify them of the situation. If you need assistance on identifying that next level of management, contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 920-869-4481 or covid-19@oneidanation.org for assistance.

- Patshia Lor
 - those who work at the casino are asking if it's going to be open
 - ANSWER – Under the Nation’s Safer at Home Declaration and the Nation’s extended Public Health State of Emergency, which is in effect until May 12, 2020, Gaming Facilities are not considered an essential business as they do not provide an essential service. However, as one of our most important revenue sources, we hope to recover our gaming operations as soon as possible in a safe environment. Communication with your supervisor is essential. If your supervisor is not providing adequate communication, please reach out to the next level of management and notify them of the situation. If you need assistance on identifying that next level of management, contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 920-869-4481 or covid-19@oneidanation.org for assistance.

- Kimberly Kimberly
 - And if there is a lay-off are we guaranteed are jobs back or do we have to reapply??
 - ANSWER – Employees who are recalled will not need to reapply. The maximum layoff period is 26 weeks. If an employee is recalled within the layoff period, continuous service remains intact for all purposes except for the accumulation of benefits (i.e. health/life insurance) during the layoff period. If an employee is not recalled within the layoff period, employment is terminated.

- Dakota Webster
 - If there are layoffs will we still have our insurance??
 - ANSWER – Healthcare insurance will end if an employee is placed in layoff status but employees are eligible to apply for COBRA. Information will be provided to employees from Benefit Advantage, the company which administers the program.

- Amy Stevens
 - I had seen something that the BIA wouldn’t be honoring their trust responsibility. They were not going to provide federal money to tribes. Is this true? I know Tehassi mention that our government members are looking into what we are eligible for.
 - ANSWER – The Nation’s Self-Governance Coordinator and the Oneida Law Office are carefully reviewing the CARES Act to determine its applicability to the Nation.

- Linda Marie Duquaine-House
 - What about those that don’t have email or even access to computers since the libraries are closed?
 - ANSWER – The Kalihwisaks will be creating special editions of the newspaper on the non-Kalihwisaks weeks. The regular Kalihwisaks will also include updated and notices. If you want to update your mailing preferences, please contact the Trust Enrollment Department at 920-869-6200 (please note, their office is closed to the public, and staff availability is limited).

- Renee Hill
 - How long will we have health care coverage/ insurance?
 - ANSWER – Healthcare insurance will end if an employee is placed in layoff status, but employees are eligible to apply for COBRA. Information will be provided to employees from Benefit Advantage, the company which administers the program.

- **Lame Angel**
 - Is there any Grocery delivery options? For our pantry?
 - ANSWER – Elder Services is providing meal delivery via their Congregate Meals Site and Meals on Wheels Programs. The Food Pantry and Food Distribution have modified their processes to comply with social distancing requirements. The Food Pantry can be reached at (920) 869-6165. Food Distribution can be reached at (920) 869-1041. Please note, staff availability is limited.

- **Lame Angel**
 - What precautions can we see for our retail workers?
 - ANSWER – The Nation is applying all CDC recommendations when it comes to its employees, including Retail Associates. For example, Social Distancing markers have been made in customer lines. In addition, Retail Enterprise is exploring the installation of plexiglass barriers.

- **Reenie Thundercloud**
 - Are people being tested or are we just assuming?
 - ANSWER – Testing is determined by Healthcare Providers. Any person who believes they have been exposed or have symptoms of COVID-19 should contact their health care provider for guidance or questions. For all other questions, we encourage all individuals to visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>.

- **Lame Angel**
 - What are you doing for the Oneida Homeless population that may not have a safe place to social distance amid the uncertain times?
 - ANSWER – A team, under the guidance of the General Manger, has been formed to address this concern. A location has been identified, and final details are under development. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available.

- **Connie Teebo**
 - What about the people who dont live on the rez, and not in boundaries?
 - ANSWER – The Oneida Nation provides support through a variety of programs and services and eligibility requirements vary depending on the program and situation. The resources tab on the Nation’s website: www.oneida-nsn.gov is where you can find information on what programs and services are offered. Depending on what is needed, local, state, and federal programs may exist. Contact your local Department of Health and Human Services for additional information.

- **Rae Skenandore**
 - Does the health center have test kits
 - ANSWER – Any person who believes they have been exposed or have symptoms of COVID-19 should contact their health care provider for guidance or questions. At this time, the Oneida Health Center does not have test kits.

- Jacqueline Ninham
 - Are we going to be able to apply or renew some of our grant funding during this time?
 - ANSWER – Grant writing, for new opportunities or applicable renewals, continues to occur by the Grants Department. All grants, new or renewals, will be reviewed critically.

- Nic Reynolds
 - Can you please verify when the emergency shut down ends, and when employees are expected to start to return to work?
 - ANSWER - The Nation’s Safer at Home Declaration and the Nation’s extended Public Health State of Emergency are in effect until May 12, 2020, unless otherwise notified by your supervisor. Communication with your supervisor is essential. If your supervisor is not providing adequate communication, please reach out to the next level of management and notify them of the situation. If you need assistance on identifying that next level of management, contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 920-869-4481 or covid-19@oneidationation.org for assistance.

- Judy Metoxensprangers
 - I’m going to ask again for consideration of elders outside the "rez" to get lunch from the elder center. We drove there before all this for lunch. Why are we not allowed to use this service now? We still can really use this.
 - Lloyd Zeise
 - Ill volunteer to deliver 2 days a week
 - Judy Metoxensprangers
 - Lloyd Zeise I thank you. However I've been told the meals are only for those living within Oneida reservation boundaries. And that I should check with my county.
 - ANSWER – The current program guidelines allow service within reservation boundaries. At this time, meal pickup is not allowed; meals are being delivered within reservation boundaries only. One option would be to check with your county of residence’s Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) for assistance.

- Buddy Laster
 - If there are layoffs for the casino why are we dropping health care insurance for are employees?
 - ANSWER – Healthcare insurance will end if an employee is placed in layoff status but employees are eligible to apply for COBRA. Information will be provided to employees from Benefit Advantage, the company which administers the program.
 - What about the grant from the fed about the loan Guarantee that the tribes don't have to pay back if you keep your employees and the payroll? We have a lot of non-tribal members that rely on or healthcare insurance and it is healthcare crisis. We should be taking care of our non-tribal members at the casino that has made our people in the Oneida Nation the success they are today.
 - ANSWER – The Nation’s Self-Governance Coordinator and the Oneida Law Office are carefully reviewing the CARES Act to determine its applicability to the Nation.
 - Should we use over the counter meds if we have symptoms?
 - ANSWER – Any person who believes they have been exposed or have symptoms of COVID-19 should contact their health care provider for guidance or questions. For all other questions, we encourage all individuals to visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>.

- Judy Nicholas
 - Can you please look into what Indian preference means for tribal members I realize this is difficult and some decisions, but will Indian preference be a must during any layoffs that may occur ? Thank you
 - ANSWER – The Nationwide Tier 5 Emergency Declaration Layoff SOP includes the option to use Indian Preference, seniority, and workload/caseload in the layoff determination process when all other criteria are equal.

- Raquel Hensley
 - Does the daycare still have limitations (10 teachers, no more than 50 kids), if so, can the teachers volunteer for layoff instead of being rotated weekly?
 - ANSWER – The Nationwide Tier 5 Emergency Declaration Layoff SOP includes volunteers in the layoff determination process.

- Nicole Peters
 - For casino workers will they still get a paycheck or do we need to file for unemployment
 - ANSWER - Payroll checks will end if an employee is placed in layoff status but employees are eligible to apply for unemployment compensation.

- Michelle Danforth Anderson
 - Will some of the \$8 Billion from the \$2Trillion govt package set aside for Tribes assistance help with the deferral of the 184 Housing Loan that many people around here have?
 - ANSWER – The Nation’s Self-Governance Coordinator and the Oneida Law Office are carefully reviewing the CARES Act to determine its applicability to the Nation.

- Janice DeCorah
 - Does lay-off mean your not getting your job back when this is all over?
 - ANSWER - The maximum layoff period is 26 weeks. If an employee is recalled within the layoff period, continuous service remains intact for all purposes except for the accumulation of benefits (i.e. health/life insurance) during the layoff period. If an employee is not recalled within the layoff period, employment is terminated.
 - Will the section in the federal stimulus package be applied for those that need to stay home with children that fall into a category listed as eligible? It states the employer pays 2/3 of salary then gets reimbursed by IRS. If so, will that persons status change as not laid off? If this section of the stimulus package is not utilized, why not? Last question, how will the tribe ensure they meet the qualifications to use the billions that will be shared among tribes and what will it go toward? Paying salaries to bring employees back sooner?
 - ANSWER – The Nation’s Self-Governance Co-Ordinator and the Oneida Law Office are carefully reviewing the CARES Act to determine its applicability to the Nation.

- Janice DeCorah
 - Will there be a moratorium on comprehensive housing’s mortgage and rents through April - June or so, or will they be waived? Would a moratorium on mortgages and rents accumulate forcing later evictions and foreclosures? How will this be addressed, letting Division make the call or BC mandating it? If not either moratorium or waived , why not?
 - ANSWER – Comprehensive Housing has taken measures to assist their customers with maintaining their rental or home. If you are having difficulty paying your monthly rent or mortgage payment, please contact Comprehensive Housing at 920-869-2227 to discuss options available.

- Cordelia Rodriguez
 - Y'all helping any of us tribal members right now who aren't living on the Rez is my question!
 - ANSWER – The Oneida Nation provides support through a variety of programs and services and eligibility requirements vary depending on the program and situation. The resources tab on the Nation’s website: www.oneida-nsn.gov is where you can find information on what programs and services are offered. Depending on what is needed, local, state, and federal programs may exist. Contact your local Department of Health and Human Services for additional information.

- Mary Graves
 - When will the layoffs start? When will the last paycheck be issued?
 - ANSWER – The Consult with your supervisor. For all employees, communication with your supervisor is essential. If your supervisor is not providing adequate communication, please reach out to the next level of management and notify them of the situation. If you need assistance on identifying that next level of management, contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 920-869-4481 or covid-19@oneidanation.org for assistance
 - On the Employee Lay-off Notification Form it states vacation/personal time will be paid out at the end of the unemployment period and is capped at 40 hours. Is it legal to take time away from people who have earned it?
 - ANSWER – Fringe benefits, such as accrual of vacation and personal time, are a discretionary benefits. Discretionary benefits are defined by the employer. Similar to the BC and GTC action of placing a cap on accrued vacation and personal time, the value of that time is subject to definition at the time of payment.

- Scott Elm
 - Will we still have access to our work email when layoffs occur? If not, how are you communicating to employees during that time?
 - ANSWER – When an employee is placed on layoff status, access to their assigned work email is not available. Instructions will be provided to employees about maintaining current contact information on file with the Human Resources Department.

- Genevieve Zayas
 - Can retail have a security guard posted to take temperatures with one of those “touchless” thermometers? Then when the casino opens have the same thing. We need a testing point set up. I’d suggest at that Woodland Church.
 - ANSWER – The Nation is applying all CDC recommendations when it comes to its employees, including Retail Associates. For example, Social Distancing markers have been made in customer lines. In addition, Retail Enterprise is exploring the installation of plexiglass barriers. These suggestions have been forwarded to the appropriate areas for consideration.