

To: All persons served by Lifeworks, Families and Staff

From: Dan Burke



Re: Updates and Changes to our Holiday Schedule

Date: May 24, 2021

I am pleased to announce that the Lifeworks Board of Directors has voted to add Juneteenth, June 19th as an official Lifeworks holiday, beginning this June. This decision will mean that our day programs and offices will be closed on Friday June 18th this year (since June 19th is a Saturday). All persons who are served at our day programs will be off that day. However if you have a job working for a company such as Lowe's or Stop & Shop where you are directly employed by that company, you will need to follow that company's policies and procedures and may need to report to work on that day.

Juneteenth is a significant day in the history of this country, yet it has not been properly recognized nor celebrated for far too long. Juneteenth is short for June 19th 1865, which is the day that truly marks the end of slavery in the United States. On that day, Federal Troops arrived in Galveston, Texas to take full control of the state of Texas and to ensure that all enslaved people be freed. Once this took place, slavery was outlawed in the country and in December, 1865, the 13th amendment was adopted in the entire United States and slavery was abolished.

The past year has further brought to our attention the ongoing challenges of social justice and racial injustice in our community. We believe as an agency, that Lifeworks needs to take significant steps to make it clear to the people we serve, to our families, and to our staff that our mission of Advocacy, Empowerment & Opportunity is inclusive and supportive of all within our Lifeworks community.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has made Juneteenth an official Massachusetts holiday. During the week of Juneteenth, we will develop programs and information designed to educate the people we serve, our families and our staff about the history of slavery, discrimination and the challenges of race relations in our country.

In addition, we are making two changes to Columbus Day- We will be changing the name of Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day, in recognition of all people involved in the discovery of America by Columbus. This recognition includes those people such as Native Americans who were already here in America when Columbus arrived from Europe. This change is being experienced throughout our country.

In addition, we are proposing that we change Indigenous Peoples' Day to a Flex Holiday. Under this plan, our offices and day programs would be open on that day and this holiday will be a flex holiday, for all to use their accrued holiday time on their own schedule. The implementation would mean that all persons served will be able to attend their day programs and transportation for these programs will be operating on this day. We ask that everyone make a note of these changes and plan their schedules accordingly. Thank you for your attention to this important change.