



COVID-19 Update: 12:00PM on Friday, July 10, 2020

On June 19th we reopened our day services/life skills training programming to about 25% of participants who had expressed an interest in returning for services. For those that have not returned to date, we offer Zoom classes and send worksheets and other information to support them during this difficult time.

LARC continues to provide community-based services as well as operate our group homes to provide services and supports for individuals and families impacted by intellectual and/or developmental disabilities as we have since 1954. Like all of Florida, we have had to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic, modifying service strategies in an effort to mitigate the risks of this pervasive virus to all involved and seek best ways to support the needs of individuals being served.

For over a month we have been advocating for testing for all staff, group home residents and day services participants parallel to what has been taking place in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. We have not been successful with getting that type of testing access to date. We have utilized various community testing strategies as interim measures, but lengthy delays in getting test results limits the usefulness of these efforts.

All LARC services include new behaviors seeking to reduce risk and screen individuals for presence of the virus, and all staff are using face masks, practicing social distancing and using enhanced hygiene and sanitization practices aiming for mitigating risk. All participants are encouraged to wear masks which we provide if needed, to practice social distancing and to engage in aggressive hand hygiene as protective behaviors. With all these efforts we have had both staff and participants infected by the virus.

Based on our protocols that are designed with safety as our guiding imperative, individuals are at home self-isolating and will require negative test results to return to work/program. We follow Department of Health (DOH) and CDC guidelines in addressing individuals who may be at risk of exposure and are working closely with the DOH to respond to these incidents and continue our facility cleaning and sanitizing processes.

The past 116 days have been incredibly challenging for all of us; as an agency, community and world. As the virus continues to spread and spikes in positive cases surround us, LARC remains committed to being cautious and planful while exploring all of the ways to continue to make LARC the best place possible to learn, work, and serve in a world where the risk of COVID-19 exists.

We urge all individuals and families we serve, caretakers and our community to take any measures possible to reduce the spread of this virus in our community. It has impacted LARC, people we serve and our staff and poses a risk for all in our community until such time as community spread is reduced from its current levels in Florida and elsewhere. What we do each and every day matters, please stay safe.

Best Regards,

Kevin Lewis
Executive Director

*For more information about COVID-19 and what you can do to keep healthy and safe, visit the Centers for Disease Control at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).