



## **A Message from the Executive Director on the phased reopening of the Benefit Funds Office**

June 8, 2020

On June 8<sup>th</sup>, the Benefit Funds Office (BFO) began the phased reopening of our physical office. The health and safety of the Fund's employees continues to be a priority and navigating through these challenging times has required the office to create a systematic approach to bringing our employees back to work. To prepare for the reopening of the BFO, we have developed a plan for the office to reopen in four distinct phases.

After our initial physical location closure on March 17, 2020, we were operating with only critical staff in the office building throughout the months of April and May. This included approximately 15% of our entire workforce. On May 29<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Muriel Bowser of Washington DC announced the lifting of the "Stay at Home" order and effective June 1<sup>st</sup>, the BFO has begun to move into Phase One of our "Safework Playbook".

Phase One will consist of an increase in the office staffing, allowing us to go beyond just critical tasks and work on catching up on matters delayed due to the COVID-19 closure. This phase will limit the number of essential employees who may work in the office, based on need. Strict guidelines will be followed to ensure the safety of our employees.

Although not tied to a specific timeline, but a real world evaluation of the circumstances in the DC Metropolitan area, we will eventually and gradually increase office staffing in Phase Two and Phase Three. Our final step in reopening will be Phase Four, which is the official opening of the office to all BFO employees. Our "Safe Work Playbook" includes in-depth guidelines for health and safety procedures, cross-functional teamwork, operating disciplines, as well as training to provide our employees with a safe working environment.

As we strive to continue to remain operational while providing you with exceptional service during the COVID-19 pandemic, you may still experience delays in processing or response time.

We continue to ask for your patience and understanding should delays occur due to the uncertain times under which we are operating.

We are consistently monitoring the virus to ensure business continuity, while simultaneously making sure that our employees and their families are remaining safe. We are committed to you and working together, we will get through this.

As always, stay safe and continue to check our website for further updates on our operating status.

Ryk Tierney, CEBS

Executive Director