

Champion of COVID Response

Gary Indiana District Office Employees

Social Security Administration



Summary:

The Social Security Office in Gary Indiana has continued to provide unparalleled service to their constituents during a pandemic.

Description:

The Gary IN FO staff have always worked as a close-knit team. When a new employee joins the office, the employees welcome the individual and fold them into the group. They care for one another as well as the customers they serve. Many of the staff live in the servicing area in which they are tasked with helping. They take pride in the help they provide and do so regardless of any obstacles that may arise. This year was no exception; a challenge arose that was bigger and more daunting than anything in years past. They stepped up immediately and provided World Class Service. The employees were sent home with little to no training on working in a virtual environment. Our office had never teleworked and the vast majority of the employees never expressed interest in participating.

The staff rallied together, combined their resources and knowledge, and without hesitation, continued to provide a high level of customer service. Our servicing area is unique in that over 30% of the citizens live below the poverty level. They rely heavily on Social Service Agencies for their everyday needs. This created challenges for the staff with what work they could and could not complete. They felt that they were leaving their customers with little support. They were concerned about how the public would reach us. We quickly began answering at least 95% of our incoming phone calls over the last year.

We decided to reach out to our local Mental Health Agency that serves a large number of our most vulnerable customers. We had a conference call to discuss logistics and how to get in touch with our representatives for assistance. We were also challenged with our available work. We found that we had resources we could share amongst the Area. The staff readily identified the time they had available and offered assistance to offices based on the workload priorities identified by the Agency. We unloaded a great deal of work from a number of offices. The assistance allowed for the Public Service Indicators to be met by other offices, and more importantly, cases processed that increased benefit levels to many customers in the metro Chicago, Northern Indiana servicing areas. The result of the employees' hard work and willingness to support all customers in our region resulted in increased benefits paid to many beneficiaries where missed entitlement was processed.

The Gary employees are proud of the service they provide the American Public and I am humbled to be their leader.

Betty Jackson

Dorothy Jackson

Praniece Nicholson

Taketa Pates

Sherry Gore

Sara Foster

Enrique Alcaraz

Irma Glowacki

Christine Swelnis

Edith Garza

Vincent Stanfel

Daniel Figueroa

Marnita Nelson

Kandice Wallskog

Sharon Bass

Jennifer G Ritter

Laura Bratcher

Juan De La Torre Jr

Jennifer J Carpenter