



# RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION

CO-CHAIR DON PIERSON

CO-CHAIR TERRIE STERLING

## Education and Workforce Task Force

May 27, 2020

Meeting called to order at: 12:00 p.m.

### Task Force Members Present:

- Ava Dejoie, Co-chair
- Kim Hunter Reed, Co-chair
- Ray Belton
- Doretha Bennett
- Bruce Busada
- Ali Bustamante
- Julie Cherry
- Camille Conaway
- Wayne Denley
- Ken Bradford (Hannah Dietsch)
- Jason Droddy (Tom Galligan)
- John Fraboni
- Paul Helton
- Jim Henderson
- Darcy McKinnon
- Brittany Major
- Kenya Messer
- Andy O'Brien
- Mike Palamone
- Paula Polito
- Cynthia Posey
- Susana Schowen
- Monty Sullivan
- Angie White
- Lisa Vosper
- Kaffia Arvie (Sonya Williams)
- Tom Yura

- Call to Order, Roll Call and Certification for Lack of Quorum
  - Dr. Lisa Vosper called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. and Ms. Kaffia Arvie called the roll.
  - Dr. Vosper established a quorum in accordance with Governor John Bel Edwards' Executive Proclamation 2020-41.
- Welcome by Co-Chairs
  - Dr. Vosper welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Task Force members for their participation. She reminded the public that they are encouraged to share any comments via email at [resilientlouisiana@la.gov](mailto:resilientlouisiana@la.gov) or by calling 888-204-5984, code 1755460#. This information is on the agenda and posted to the website.
  - Ms. Ava Dejoie began by stating that this is the fifth Education Workforce Taskforce meeting and thanked everyone for their participation. She stated that the Task Force is charged with analyzing information to respond to this crisis, being proactive in its approach, and informing and contributing to the development of a long-term and comprehensive strategy for a more resilient economy in the future.
- Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
  - Dr. Reed asked for approval of the minutes, as amended, from the May 20, 2020 meeting of the Resilient Louisiana Commission: Education Workforce Task Force.
  - On motion of Ms. Doretha Bennett, seconded by Mr. Bruce Busada, the Task Force voted unanimously to accept the minutes, as amended, from the May 20, 2020 meeting of the Resilient Louisiana Commission: Education Workforce Task Force.
- Public Comments
  - No public comments were submitted
- Update from the LWC on Unemployment Data with Q&A
  - Ms. Dejoie welcomed Dr. Ali Bustamante, Chief Economist, Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC).
  - Dr. Bustamante provided his weekly unemployment update. He highlighted Louisiana's current hiring trends relative to where they were in the past and provided data on the volume of postings and which industries are hiring. There have been considerable hiring declines in almost every industry, with the exception of transportation and warehousing and accommodation and food services. These two industries have had disproportionately strong gains. While the growth in transportation and warehousing makes sense given the increase in ordering of supplies during the pandemic, the accommodation and food services data are interesting since a large share of unemployment compensation claims come from that sector. This suggests that either a structural transformation is occurring, either temporary or long-term, in which employers are looking for very different kinds of staff, or employers are taking the opportunity to hire new staff instead of recalling previous staff. The healthcare and social assistance sector is also experiencing declines; the sector, as a whole, represents approximately 20% of the labor force, both in Louisiana and nationwide.

- Dr. Bustamante also discussed the number of job orders received in Louisiana, which includes internal job orders through the HIRE system. The HIRE system is a robust platform that enables businesses to post jobs and recruit workers. It also allows job seekers to upload resumes and additional information for employment matching. In terms of employment and reemployment, the healthcare and social assistance industry is core in our labor market today. The key industry questions are the following: what share of the industries is looking to recall workers, and what share is looking to recruit new workers with a particularly different set of skills?
- According to Dr. Bustamante it is worth noting that accommodation and food services and healthcare and social assistance were particularly vulnerable to this pandemic, yet these two industries are performing most of the hiring. This indicates not only that these industries were vulnerable to the pandemic in the context of potential interruptions to their supply chains, but also that the pandemic itself may have led them to redesign their operating mechanisms. Dr. Bustamante also highlighted resilient industries which are more likely to recall workers instead of undergoing a critical operating transformation.
- He concluded his presentation by stating that Louisiana has a historically record-high unemployment rate of 14.5%, just below the national average of 14.7%. National trends indicate historic levels of unemployment, in terms of both the unemployment rate and unemployment levels, and a historically low labor-force participation rate. Louisiana is not alone in undergoing a very drastic economic shift.
- In response to Dr. Bustamante's presentation, Ms. Camille Conaway stated that there is a structural shift in the hospitality sector, particularly for restaurants. Two factors to consider are (1) workers are not motivated to return while receiving higher levels of unemployment compensation; and (2) the Paycheck Protection Program requires 75% of the grant be expended on payroll. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) ends for most companies in the next 3-4 weeks, with a definitive end in June. Businesses cannot operate at 50% of their normal capacity. As a result, Ms. Conaway predicts another wave of either temporary or permanent closures, with a data spike in July. Dr. Bustamante stated that, in an effort to facilitate recall, unemployment compensation benefits are ceased if employees do not return to work when recalled by former employers. The PPP is merely designed to provide temporary assistance to employers to retain staff, and he noted that there are a range of complex issues contributing to the unemployment dynamic.
- Updates from Education and Training Partners on Action Steps during the Crisis Phase with Q&A
  - Dr. Henderson began his presentation on the University of Louisiana System's response to COVID-19 and shared some specific interventions being conducted systemically. He noted the Herculean task from faculty and staff to move 90% of the UL System's courses completely online immediately after the pandemic forced

- shelter in place orders in our state. Approximately 96.2% of students re-engaged in learning management systems subsequent to implementation of remote learning.
- Dr. Henderson thanked Dr. Reed for her efforts in bringing healthcare professionals to the table to provide guiding principles and a framework that all nine institutions of the UL System will follow. The System and campuses will implement the following four guiding principles as they plan for face to face courses in the fall.
    1. The health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and our communities are paramount.
    2. The continuity of learning and research must be maintained, adapting to fulfill Principle 1 as appropriate and necessary.
    3. The financial health and viability of the enterprise must be protected and are dependent upon the fulfillment of Principles 1 and 2.
    4. The social, emotional, and economic welfare of our communities must be considered and is dependent upon the fulfillment of Principles 1, 2, and 3.
  - He discussed the future of work and the role of technology, noting the technological change and an exponential curve describing how humans adapt historically. COVID-19 has accelerated the arrival of the future of work. In 2002, less than 5% of jobs were considered high digital, while today more than 23% of jobs are considered high digital. This is a phenomenal change to the nature of work that has occurred in just over a dozen years.
  - Dr. Henderson stated that known jobs and known skills are the core capabilities that will drive us forward to the unknown jobs, which will become more prevalent over the next decade. The emergence and relevance of these skills over this period of uncertainty is going to become more critical. The UL System has developed a systemic approach to defining these core capabilities. He highlighted the importance of CompeteLA which was launched in 2019 to serve the more than 600,000 adults in Louisiana with some college and no degree.
  - Across UL campuses are 83 programs available to CompeteLA students who have been out of school for at least two years and have some college and no degree. The cost is
  - \$275 per credit hour, priced at a point that is accessible for adults. This meets institutions' need to be economically viable, even as they become less reliant on state resources. The statewide strategic vision of an educational attainment goal of 60% of working-age adults holding a postsecondary education credential by the year 2030 is essential, and a goal of which the UL System is very proud.
  - Dr. Reed introduced Dr. Ray Belton, President of the Southern University System.
  - Dr. Belton thanked Task Force participants for their work and noted that the arrival of COVID-19 has affected the lives of all Louisiana citizens and had a significant impact on the Southern University System. In recovering from the COVID-19 crisis,

Southern wants to (1) ensure the safety of faculty, staff, and students; (2) provide some element of continuity of quality of education; and (3) ensure effective administrative operations going forth. All of this must include a continuing focus on fulfilling the goals of the Master Plan as adopted by the Board of Regents. University communities came together immediately and responded collectively toward the delivery and adoption of online learning. Leadership continues to meet daily to develop transition plans that all involved hope to unveil within the next ten days. Southern feels very confident that its will be able to continue its mission and continue providing quality education to its students.

- Dr. Sullivan recalled the first week in March and stated that LCTCS, like other higher education systems, were thrust into an environment of having to transition all courses to online delivery. Starting the second week of March through last week of April, LCTCS campuses graduated over 2,400 healthcare professionals to serve every community in the State of Louisiana. He noted the facilities in the manufacturing environment up and down the Mississippi River need essential personnel, such as industrial maintenance technicians, process operators, and an entire spectrum of workers to ensure those facilities can continue to operate. The transportation sector needs CDL drivers as well. LCTCS is committed to supporting the workforce needs of the state.
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- Campuses immediately began to plan for the summer by moving general education courses online and continuing to accelerate on-site technical programs with social distancing, to ensure that students are able to graduate and go to work. The statewide Master Plan tells an important story which, if important before COVID-19, is even more important today. Higher education will continue to focus energy, efforts and work on a diverse workforce and talent pool that attracts people to Louisiana and encourages them to become a part of the economy and culture we have created.
- Dr. Sullivan emphasized several important points going forward. First, basic-level Internet access has evolved into a basic utility and we must invest in universal access. Second, he recognized Dr. Bustamante and his colleagues for their commendable work to identify gaps and occupational demands, and noted that the occupational forecast likely needs a reset. Third, two-year colleges have begun to focus on four kinds of certifications, resulting from their strategic advantage of being closer to the market than others in the postsecondary realm. As Louisiana has shifted from majority state- to majority student-funded, with only 30% of the cost of operations provided by the state, campuses are concerned about losing enrollment. He noted the House Resolution to study the future of two-year colleges, intended to aid in developing plans for delivery of the college mission to a broader set of people across Louisiana and sustaining the two-year college mission through economic shocks and turmoil. He also promoted the REBOOT Louisiana proposal which seeks

- to utilize \$40M in one-time money to support short-term training for displaced workers across the state.
- Partner Update from DCFS and Implications for Education and Workforce with Q&A
    - Partners from the Department of Children and Family Services were delayed at the Legislature and will present at the June 3, 2020 Education Workforce Task Force meeting.
  - Sub-Group Reports, Updates and Recommendation Review with Discussion
    - Dr. Reed introduced Ms. Susie Schowen and asked her to facilitate the discussion. Ms. Schowen introduced Ms. Paula Polito.
    - Ms. Polito shared data on child care centers open and their capacity from the Louisiana Policy Institute. As of May 20, 2020, 849 of 1,624 licensed early child care and education providers in the state are open and serving children, with an increase expected when Louisiana enters Phase II. Considering Phase I group size restrictions for infants, an estimated 17,513 seats are available, which is 68% fewer children being served than pre-COVID-19.
    - Ms. Angie White provided an update on the Alignment and Data sub-group. She stated there are two categories of goals and recommendations: (1) reemployment, which could be the short-term response; and (2) resilient skills, a longer-term focus. The sub-group spoke with the Louisiana Workforce Commission on the HIRE website's streamlining, usability, and marketing. A user guide on navigating the system is also important, and job seekers and recruiting employers should be pointed to the same website, as it makes it easy to gauge current demand. Representatives from the LWC and workforce development boards are observing a plethora of job postings and receiving feedback from employers who are actually hiring employees. It will be important to better align this feedback with workforce development board staff, who are managing funds used to encourage potential individuals interested in new careers and direct them to training that is in demand. Also, postsecondary staff who work with job seekers should be encouraged to learn to navigate the HIRE system, possibly through online training. Sub-group members are actively analyzing post-COVID job postings on HIRE and conducting a common outreach to employers who are posting jobs to determine if new skills are being sought that were not previously posted. A web tool should be created to gather data for reporting to be shared with postsecondary institutions and possibly even high schools to make our workforce as resilient as possible. In addition, opportunities should be pursued to ensure that our higher education partners and workforce development partners understand what jobs of the future look like, as a proactive approach will prevent playing chronic catch-up.
    - Mr. Mike Palamone presented for the Education and Training in the New Normal sub-group, stating that his recommendation is for the LCTCS to become the one-stop service provider for local WIBs and acknowledged that accomplishing this will require a realignment of staff. He suggested that if we are able to achieve

- realignment with Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and LCTCS, we would not need resilience and recovery phases. Creating a new, streamlined process with functional guidelines would allow us to handle any event or crisis, whether acute shock or chronic stress, with only minor adjustment efforts. The approach would be two-pronged, focusing on (1) immediate traditional jobs and (2) new jobs, new careers, and retraining. Future work could include evaluating the potential for legislation and federal policy changes to move this concept forward. Additionally, partners must collaborate for the one-stop-shop applications. Mr. Palamone noted he had held a call with Ms. Bennett to discuss. Also on the call were two WIB directors, from St. Bernard and the Delta region, both of whom were favorable to advancing the concept. He indicated that the idea may seem unconventional, but that some other states are already taking this approach and he would conduct additional research. Later in the week he would join calls with Ms. Bennett and WIB directors, to further discuss their thoughts about the recommendation, and Louisiana Calling, for presentation of a potential marketing campaign to allow the public to understand the process, locate training programs, and find unemployment benefits.
- Mr. Paul Helton discussed the work of the Digital Divide sub-group. He provided five different areas of recommendations, including providing support to two existing initiatives—the BEL Commission and LONI. Incentivizing the private- and public-sector partners is important for pursuing and instituting the administration of those broadband networks across the state. Some cutting-edge technologies use a train of satellites streaming across the sky (viewable at night) called the SpaceX StarLink Network; this should be in place by the end of 2020 or early 2021. Providing broadband access by satellite costs less than \$80 a month, so this prospect must be investigated, along with a focus on putting more fiber in the ground. Dedicating resources and promoting opportunities for both public and private sectors to encourage the adoption of broadband technologies are both very important. More remote area work and remote learning opportunities that encourage people to get connected are needed.
  - Ms. Conaway echoed Mr. Helton’s comments and reiterated that fiber in the ground is a long-term and expensive solution. She suggested mobile cell towers, new cell towers, or satellite technology as paths to get to a point where accessibility problems are solved, and the focus can shift to connectivity, ensuring that people gain access. Satellite technology should be considered because it is largely available and access is a matter of affordability.
  - Next Steps, Timelines and Reporting
    - Ms. Schowen provided an update on the RLC reporting processes and timelines, reminding the group of the RLC submission date of June 12, 2020. Reports are requested from the four sub-groups and these should be framed around the development of recommendations. Last week, the RLC approved a reporting

- template that includes a set of recommendations. These recommendations can be addressed to any potential audience, which provides much more flexibility. After all task forces have submitted their reports, the RLC will engage the individual task forces in discussions. The RLC will submit its final report at the end of that process. The Education Workforce Task Force has two meetings before submission of the report: June 3 and June 10. Recommendations will be finalized at the June 10 meeting. A Google Doc will be transmitted to allow members and staff to populate recommendations and allow viewing of the document by all Task Force members.
- While Charge I from the RLC focused on the crisis phase, the charge for the report is focused on resilience moving forward. This is about more than just COVID-19 and the pandemic; this is about resilience in the face of acute shocks and other types of crises.
  - Ms. Schowen noted items for consideration. One of the recommendations centered around the possibility of the sub-cabinet taking on the role of mentoring and guiding regional partners in solidifying collaborative processes and providing guidance. A comprehensive funding map was suggested that aids in understanding what funds and resources are available around workforce and training. Collaborative skills analyses are also recommended, to understand where jobs are headed in the future. It is critical to understand where our economy is going and which skills are going to be most valued. There is a recognition that this is not about jobs, but about skills. A group of recommendations targeted resilient people and families, robust child care accessibility, and access to online learning. Dr. Sullivan was articulate about the need for internet access at the home level. This is a fundamental right in our society, and we are seeing the consequences of a lack of access. Concepts surrounding proactive resilience are important to understanding and identifying characteristics of acute shocks and chronic stresses, and to preparing, rehearsing, and training.
  - Ms. Schowen identified ways of creatively transforming our communities and economy for a more resilient Louisiana. There is a specific need in the technology space to offer students an opportunity to work in real-world like environments prior to going into the workforce. Another idea is to build a community of students and recent graduates who could provide technology resources to solve problems of interest to cities and state governments, serving the public interest and providing them with expanded work experience. This work is particularly relevant at this time, though cost is certainly a question and thoughts and ideas on funding mechanisms are welcome.
  - Additional discussion focused on a substantial loss of talent in Louisiana if we are not able to reemploy quickly. This unprecedented challenge could affect our educational attainment rates. There is the opportunity to encourage students to major in fields aligned with employment in Louisiana, with a subsidy for tuition or access to a refundable loan program. Also considered was a student loan payback if

- students agree to stay in Louisiana or work in a particular field. The need for rural healthcare workers presents an opportunity for utilizing this incentive. This incentive could encourage STEM teachers to work in the K-12 system in rural areas, as well.
- Mr. John Fraboni stated that Operation Spark has been offering services to government and cities in areas requiring software solutions. A challenge is that government organizations and companies often lack the resources to coordinate, especially considering the complexity of the pandemic. A pilot work-study-style program may be possible to coordinate the talent coming out of colleges with programs to assist government and/or companies, with coordination that is similar to apprentice programs. It could help to address issues experienced by companies, which often lack the capacity to dedicate resources to onboarding and finding activities for incoming graduates who may not have real-world experience.
  - Ms. Schowen stated that those who have been working on advancing apprenticeships and work-based learning programs recognize that the bottleneck is frequently on the side of employers, especially small employers. Understanding how to make the programs as functional as possible is a pressure on their resources.
  - Dr. Reed stated that asset mapping and the opportunity to collaborate and listen to what different partners can bring to the table adds significant value. This opportunity allows us to come together, to understand, to analyze, and to advance a shared vision for resilience in Louisiana. This work has tremendous promise.
- Wrap-up, Closing Remarks and Adjournment
- Dr. Reed provided closing remarks on the Task Force's aggressive agenda. She noted that two meetings remain and several conversations are ongoing; these will be incorporated into a report to be discussed in draft at the June 10 meeting. This group will also consider the alignment of other Task Force groups with these recommendations.
  - The next meeting for the Education and Workforce Task Force will be Wednesday, June 3, 2020 at noon.
  - Dr. Reed adjourned the meeting at 1:57 p.m.