



RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION

CO-CHAIR DON PIERSON

CO-CHAIR TERRIE STERLING

Education and Workforce Task Force

June 10, 2020

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

Task Force Members Present:

- Ava Dejoie, Co-chair
- Kim Hunter Reed, Co-chair
- Doretha Bennett
- Bruce Busada
- Julie Cherry
- Camille Conaway
- Nicole Bono (Hannah Dietsch)
- Wayne Denley
- Jason Droddy (Tom Galligan)
- John Fraboni
- Henry Heier
- Paul Helton
- Jeannine Kahn (Jim Henderson)
- Brittany Major
- Kenya Messer
- Mike Palamone
- Paula Polito
- Janet Pope
- Cynthia Posey
- Chris Broadwater (Monty Sullivan)
- Angie White

- Call to Order, Roll Call and Certification for Lack of Quorum
 - Dr. Kim Hunter Reed called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. and Ms. Kaffia Arvie conducted roll call.
 - Ms. Arvie established a quorum in accordance with Governor John Bel Edwards' Executive Proclamation 2020-41.
- Welcome by Co-Chairs
 - Dr. Kim Hunter Reed welcomed everyone to the seventh Education Workforce Taskforce meeting. She stated that the Task Force's charge is two-fold: analyzing information to respond to the crisis needs that have evolved, being proactive in our approach, and informing and contributing to the structural redesign development and of a long-term and comprehensive strategy for building a more resilient Louisiana in the future.
 - Dr. Reed thanked the Task Force members for their participation and reminded the public that they are encouraged to share any comments via email or phone. Contact information is on the agenda and posted to the website.
- Approval of minutes from previous meeting
 - Dr. Reed asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 3, 2020 meeting of the Resilient Louisiana Commission: Education Workforce Task Force.
 - On motion of Mr. Bruce Busada, seconded by Ms. Julie Cherry, the Task Force voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the June 3, 2020 meeting of the Resilient Louisiana Commission: Education Workforce Task Force.
- Public Comments
 - Mr. Dorian Nunez provided several questions and statements:
 - How does the public get a copy of recommendations before they are approved, to provide input?
 - Regarding workforce, Louisiana is at the bottom in personal financial literacy, home ownership, entrepreneurship, and education. We must do a better job to educate the educators to advance our state in these areas.
 - We must better utilize our HBCUs. They are an underutilized resource in our state.
 - Is Secretary Dejoie's email address available?
 - Regarding OJT, what incentives/grants are available for small businesses with one to ten employees? Everything discussed seems to be focused on large businesses.
 - Ms. Dejoie responded to Mr. Nunez by sharing her contact information and stated that she would be glad to speak with Mr. Nunez. The LWC has an incumbent worker program that provides up to \$3,000 per employee for training, and all local offices work with small businesses. OJT is available to

small employers as well as large employers, and that is where local offices play a role. LWC is developing a template and laying the foundation at the state level for bringing businesses of all sizes together to make a statewide impact.

- Dr. Reed indicated that the Task Force's information and recommendations are publicly available through the Resilient Louisiana Commission (RLC) and LBoR, as well as through individual information requests via email.
- Update from LWC on Unemployment Data with Q & A
 - Ms. Dejoie welcomed Dr. Ali Bustamante, Chief Economist, LWC. Dr. Bustamante began his presentation with a series of graphics:
 - Louisiana and U.S. Comparison: January – May 2020 (Employment and Labor Force): The historic high unemployment rate across the nation recently decreased from 14.7% to 13.3%. This decline is dramatically different from previously predicted continuing increases. It is important, however, to understand the context for Louisiana: the state did not experience the same unemployment levels or rates as experienced nationwide.
 - Louisiana and U.S. Comparison: January – May 2020 (Unemployment and Unemployment Rate): Louisiana experienced a greater employment decline compared to the nation. Louisiana's labor market has experienced a considerable decline in labor force participation level and rate over the past month, and we observed this at the national level, as well. In April 2020, approximately 328,000 people lost their jobs, which prompted an increase in the unemployment level to approximately 140,000. A large gap of 188,000 people indicates that these individuals dropped out of the labor force—not collecting unemployment benefits, not willing or able to work, and/or not actively searching for jobs. In terms of resiliency, we have one group willing and able to work and another group sitting on the sidelines.
 - Louisiana Weekly Continued Claims Growth by Region (March 14 – May 30, 2020): In terms of continued claims across regions, we observed a plateau and are now seeing a decrease across almost every region. Some regions experience higher rates of unemployment compensation growth relative to others, but there appears to be a relatively uniform pattern in declines.
 - Louisiana Weekly Continued Claims Growth by Industry (March 14 – May 30, 2020) – Vulnerable, Sensitive, and Resilient Industries: We are observing the unemployment curve decline in vulnerable, sensitive, and resilient industries. The broader unemployment compensation figures are showing more stability, declining as workers drop off unemployment compensation rolls and return to work. However, we must focus on encouraging people to return to the labor force. The mining industry

also showed a plateau and downward trend as the price of oil recovered slightly. The issues that led to considerable increases in unemployment and unemployment compensation claims are starting to smooth out, although we are not out of the woods yet. Cases of COVID-19 are still occurring, and we must focus on maintaining the reemployment pattern while continuing to mitigate the pandemic.

- In response to Dr. Bustamante’s presentation, Ms. Dejoie stated that the Bureau of Labor Statistics miscalculated a compilation of data following a classification error excluding employed but absent from work due to other reasons. If this classification had been included in calculations, the national unemployment rate would have been approximately 16.3%.
- Partner update from Workforce Development Boards and Implications for Education and Workforce Alignment with Q & A
 - Workforce Board Directors
 - Ms. Dejoie introduced Ms. Tina Roper from Workforce Area 20, which consists of all parishes in the Felicianas and those that wrap around Baton Rouge. Ms. Roper started her presentation by noting that there are 15 workforce areas in the state. Federal money flows from the Department of Labor through the LWC and then to local areas. The federal model stresses local control of funds to ensure that the communities are receiving funds in demand areas meant to address business, community, and the employable workforce. That requires strategic alignments at the local level. We evaluate labor market data and the occupational forecast to determine high-demand job areas when looking at Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding.
 - Ms. Roper stated there have been some conversations about one-stop partnerships and WIOA regulations. This big issue is leveraging resources for career services around the issue of how best to get people to work. WIOA regulations identified sixteen partners that could be involved and working together in one-stop centers. In terms of understanding the one-stop process, there are four required co-located partners in comprehensive one-stop centers: WIOA programs, adult basic education and family literacy, vocational rehabilitation, and Wagner Peyser. Many other partners can be co-located but must have MOUs for operation. All 15 local workforce areas are required by law to have one comprehensive center, and those four mandated entities must be co-located; others may be co-located, but need not be. Ms. Doretha Bennett operates a comprehensive center in Monroe and does an excellent job of encouraging collaboration among partners in one location. Space requirements for co-location of all partners can be significant, stretching to the size of a mall. One-stop operators must be competitively procured,

per federal regulations. They bring partners together, host quarterly meetings, and ensure clients are being served appropriately. Local areas can decide based on need what the one-stop partner will look like.

- Ms. Roper described career services work, detailing services provided and participation data:
 - Career Services
 - Comprehensive and specialized assessments;
 - Development of an individual employment plan, including the list of and information about, eligible training providers;
 - Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
 - Career planning (e.g. case management);
 - Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training; in some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as short-term prevocational services;
 - Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
 - Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, or training, or employment;
 - Financial literacy services;
 - Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
 - English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.
 - Local Career and Business Services (last three months)
 - Individuals
 - 347,703 People Registered for Assistance
 - 857,940 Services Provided
 - Employers
 - 30,595 Employers Assisted
 - 12,823 Job Orders Created

- 72,225 Job Referrals Created
- Workforce Training Services
 - Training services can be critical to the employment success of many adults and dislocated workers. There is no sequence requirement for “career services” and training. This means that one-stop center staff may determine training is appropriate regardless of whether the individual has received basic or individualized career services first.
 - Under WIOA, training services may be provided if the one-stop center staff determine, after an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning, that the individual:
 - Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment, that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
 - Needs training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through career services alone; and
 - Has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services.
 - Training services, when determined appropriate, must be provided either through an Individual Training Account (ITA) or through a training contract such as OJT, Incumbent Worker, or customized training.
 - Training services must be linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area or planning region or in a geographic area in which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to commute or relocate.
 - The selection of training services should be conducted in a manner that maximizes customer choice, is linked to in-demand occupations, informed by the performance of relevant training

providers, and coordinated to the extent possible with other sources of assistance

- WIOA Program Eligibility
 - Adult
 - 18 years or older requesting individualized services from workforce solutions;
 - Authorized to work in the United States;
 - Family income at or below 100%;
 - Poverty line or 70% lower living standard; or
 - Meets one of the following criteria:
 - Deficient in Basic Skills (8.9 or below in reading and/or math)
 - Receives or is a member of a family that receives (currently or in the past six months) one of the following:
 - TANF, SNAP, SSI, or other public assistance
 - Foster Care
 - Homeless
 - Receives or is eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch
 - Disability
 - Dislocated Worker
 - No age limit
 - Income eligibility
 - Authorized to work in United States and one of the following:
 - Terminated or laid off, eligible for or exhausted UI and unlikely to return to industry or occupation
 - Lost job from permanent closure or substantial layoff of a plant, facility, or enterprise
 - Was self-employed and now unemployed because of economic conditions or natural disaster
 - Displaced homemaker
 - Spouse of a member of Armed Forces who lost employment due to permanent change in duty station or is unemployed, underemployed and has difficulty finding or upgrading employment
 - Recently separated veteran
 - Out-of-School Youth

- 16-24 years old not attending compulsory school and school dropout; or
- Youth required to attend school who has not attended for at least the most recent complete school year's calendar quarter; or
- Homeless or Runaway; or
- In foster care or aged out of foster care; or
- Pregnant or Parenting; or
- Subject to the juvenile or adult justice system; or
- Has a disability; or
- At least one of the following apply:
 - received HS Diploma/equivalent and is low income;
 - Is deficient in basic skills (8.9 or below in reading and/or math);
 - is an English learner; or
 - Requires additional assistance to complete an employment program, or to secure and hold employment.
- She concluded by discussing the types of training services and the future of integrated training needs. Types of Training Services include:
 - High-skill and high-demand occupational training –mostly thru ETPL: community & technical colleges, private training providers, online, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship
 - Supportive services for individuals enrolled in skills training: childcare, transportation, books/supplies, etc.
 - Employer-based training activities: on-the-job, customized, IWTP, internships, transitional jobs
 - Special career development and work experience programs offered for youth ages 16-24 differ by area. We have been working with local LCTCS and proprietary programs to email students in ETPL-approved programs currently enrolled and seeking enrollment, to make sure they are referred to us if they have financial needs.
- Mr. Patrick Fontenot, Chairman of Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) #40, expressed concern that local workforce development boards and entities could potentially lose autonomy throughout the State.
- In response to Mr. Fontenot, Ms. Doretha Bennett questioned legislation that would potentially monitor collaboration among LWDBs and partners and report this information back to the LBOR, LWC, and the legislature.

- Ms. Bennett is also concerned about losing autonomy at the local level and asked Dr. Reed and Secretary Dejoie to speak to these issues.
- Dr. Reed responded that she wants to make the expectations and rules of engagement for the Education Workforce Task Force very clear. This is a safe space for members to talk about continuous improvement in the face of enormous unemployment and enormous opportunity. She stated that among this Task Force, there has been no interest in and no recommendations for taking control over local workforce development entities, instead the focus is on improving our systems to get people employed and trained.
 - Ms. Angie White asked for a brief written description of the on-the-job training (OJT) program, which Ms. Dejoie offered to provide. Local entities have parameters for contract approval and execution of contracts must take place prior to the start of the OJT program. Ms. Dejoie added that massive OJT programs are being administered by industry coordinators. Ms. Roper stated that her team collaborates with the local Chambers of Commerce for OJT programs and uniform worksite agreements (approximately three pages) are executed in advance.
 - Ms. Dejoie stated that meetings going forward should start with tangible data around goals, such as how many Louisiana workers have been put to work, employment numbers on the rise, etc., as indicators of success.
 - Dr. Reed stated that in this discussion she captured the need for workforce outreach to all regional economic developers, the need to know more about higher education, and the need to know more about OJT. Dr. Reed suggested that Task Force members provide regular information on readily available resources to capitalize on opportunities for synergy and leveraging as we continue to collaborate on the mission and charge to the Task Force.
 - Dr. Reed asked Ms. Roper whether the dollar amounts for training are different for each individual. Ms. Roper had stated that WIOA funding is last dollar funding. Ms. Roper indicated that funds received are based on the training program and that each local workforce development area caps the allotment based on certain criteria, such as the length of training. Allocations are revisited and budgets increased as additional resources and dollars become available.
- Sub-group Report-outs, Updates and Recommendation Review with Discussion
 - Dr. Reed introduced Ms. Susie Schowen to facilitate the discussion. Ms. Schowen began with a recap of the process by reminding the Task Force of the requirement to submit a report to the Resilient Louisiana Commission (RLC) encompassing the group's recommendations, to be followed by a question-and-answer session with Dr. Reed and Ms. Dejoie. The RLC will compile the

recommendations from all its 15 task forces and produce a final comprehensive report. The official due date for the report is Friday June 12, but the Task Forces have been given a one week extension until next Friday, June 19. A vote on final recommendations will take place on Wednesday, June 17.

- Mr. Mike Palamone provided an update on his subgroup by defining some pathways to post-COVID-19 efforts. The subgroup has had several discussions with LCTCS and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and while there are pros and cons to these discussions, the effort is worthy of further evaluation. He suggested two smaller-scale pilot programs in collaboration with volunteer WIBs and REDOs and also discussed the need for a federal agenda to increase funding flexibility.
- Ms. Roper stated that she serves ten parishes, including both rural and urban areas surrounding Baton Rouge. She asked for more clarity on the proposal and suggested additional discussion with all 15 workforce development chairs in a smaller group before recommendations on WIB pilots are finalized.
- Ms. Schowen and Mr. Paul Helton indicated that there are no recommendations relative to moving control of workforce boards instead collaborative regional process conversations have focused on partnerships with local workforce boards to help elevate their efforts and engage work being performed by other surrounding entities. The goal is to leverage all resources, to ensure sure that everyone is involved in this coordinated effort.
- Next Steps, Timelines and Reporting
 - Ms. Schowen highlighted the equity principles that have been sent out to all task forces as a frame of reference for our work. In the context of Louisiana's resiliency, we all believe and perceive equity to be inextricably linked and woven into the path forward. A wonderful and well-received presentation provided to the RLC by Ms. Angela Blackwell made clear that equity is the superior growth model. Considering that we are tasked with looking at workforce development, the future of our Louisiana economy, and building resilience for our people, our families, and our state, equity is a crucial central point for our conversations.
 - Principles for Equity in Resilience
 - Resilience is bigger than recovery. Recovery gets us back to where we were. Resilience is about building the capacity of individuals, businesses and communities to withstand, recover from, and thrive after crises. When we focus efforts on equity, true resilience abounds.
 - Employing a wider lens on equity, our task forces and the agencies that influence or drive their work ideally serve the same goal: promoting resilience. In doing so, the following guiding questions can be used by

task forces in the development of recommendations that build equity across Louisiana.

- **Make People Our Priority**
 - Louisiana's people have suffered disproportionately in ways that include, but reach far wider than, what the COVID-19 infection and death data shows. Approximately, 1 in 5 people in the state live in poverty. According to the 2018 United Way Alice Project report, 66% of jobs in Louisiana pay less than \$20 per hour, with more than two-thirds of those jobs paying less than \$15 per hour.
 - Louisiana is also the most unequal state in the country in relation to the gender pay gap, whereby in 2019 women earn 69 cents for every dollar men make. Black women are paid less than half—47 cents on the dollar—of what white men make. As a result, Louisiana has the 2nd highest poverty rate; the 3rd highest child poverty rate, the 4th lowest median household income, and the 2nd highest income inequality rate in the United States.
 - The pandemic has further exacerbated the inability of Louisianans to earn the money they need to keep themselves and their families healthy and safe. How will your recommendations prioritize vulnerable people and their jobs so we recover better than we entered this pandemic?
- **We Must be Honest about Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Disparities**
 - The racial disparities in COVID-19 deaths are not a coincidence, but a result of systemic inequities, inequalities and policy choices. True resilience will be a result of the development of recovery strategies and practices that are conscious of racial realities. How will your recommendations seek to eliminate the continuing impact of past and current discrimination?
- **Increase Opportunity in Rural and Urban Areas Facing Extreme Poverty**
 - The alarming COVID-19 infection and death rates in Louisiana can be traced back to the combination of ethnicity, poverty, and place. Recovery strategies can bring opportunities to the places of concentrated poverty that need them most in both rural and urban areas. How will your recommendations ensure that ZIP codes don't predict health and economic outcomes?
- **Create Prosperity Pathways through Opportunities for Job Seekers and Small Businesses**
 - Small businesses are the backbone of Louisiana's economy. Pathways to prosperity for all Louisianans will be further enhanced by connecting disadvantaged job seekers and small, diverse businesses to new opportunities. How will your recommendations create more ladders of

- opportunity so that Louisiana becomes a stronger, more prosperous and resilient state?
- Ms. Schowen then presented the overarching draft recommendation and supporting priorities for the Task Forces consideration. This overarching recommendation serves as the frame to populate the remaining recommendations that have come from this Task Force.
- Overarching DRAFT Recommendation
 - Transformative redesign of education and workforce systems with every approach centered on the person and the family:
 - Crisis-informed snapshot of the state of the economy and opportunity in LA
 - Proactive and braided resourcing
 - Collaborative regional processes
 - Dr. Reed asked for a motion to approve the language of the Overarching Draft Recommendation of Resilient Louisiana Commission: Education Workforce Task Force.
 - On motion of Dr. Janet Pope, seconded by Mr. Paul Helton, the Task Force voted unanimously to approve the language of the Overarching Draft Recommendation of the Resilient Louisiana Commission: Education Workforce Taskforce.
 - Ms. Schowen then called on Mr. Helton to present the recommendations of the Digital Divide subgroup. Mr. Helton stated that he collaborated with Mr. Wayne Denley and Mr. Jason Drodgy on these recommendations.
 - Recommendation #1
 - Brief Description: Provide immediate and tangible support for existing broadband initiatives in order to rapidly accelerate statewide availability
 - Intended Audience: State Government, Local Governments, Telecom Partners
 - Recommendation Type: Funding, Governance, Process, and Policy
 - Details:
 - Accelerate the important current timeline and goals for BEL to align with urgent need for all educational and economic development processes in Louisiana to have full internet access.
 - Fully engage the commission (or appropriate agency) to lead and coordinate the collaboration effort necessary to achieve full access for all.
 - Expand the use of LONI, where available, to public sector subscribers.
 - Use Cares Act Funds for LONI System to make broadband access available to schools in rural communities.

- Aggressively develop opportunities for resources to provide funding support for the infrastructure needed for full and effective implementation.
- Review all permitting requirements with the intent to streamline the processes for approval and project implementation.
- Recommendation #2
 - Brief Description: Incentivize partners to pursue installation of broadband infrastructure and implementation of broadband access
 - Intended Audience: State Government, Local Governments, Telecom Partners
 - Recommendation Type: Funding, Governance, Process, and Policy
 - Details:
 - Follow models started in Mississippi and Arkansas to expand high-speed broadband service to rural markets.
 - Codify cooperation and collaboration between utilities/co-ops and private telecom providers.
 - Develop financial incentives for providers that include rural or less profitable areas.
 - Create private/public partnership opportunities in the interest of developing a complete penetration of services to hard-to-reach areas.
- Recommendation #3
 - Brief Description: Implement and support alternative methods for broadband connectivity.
 - Intended Audience: State Government, Local Governments, Telecom Partners
 - Recommendation Type: Funding, Governance, Process, and Policy
 - Details:
 - Expand RF network availability for both long-haul and last-mile connectivity where traditional cable/fiber networks are cost-prohibitive.
 - Increase mobile network capacity in rural and underserved areas.
 - Pursue innovative and emerging broadband opportunities (e.g., Space X Starlink).
 - State-level campaign to educate public currently not successfully using Internet, on ways and methods to gain wireless access until full broadband is available.
- Recommendation #4
 - Brief Description: Commit dedicated resources to the expansion of broadband access across the state
 - Intended Audience: State Government and Local Governments
 - Recommendation Type: Funding and Policy

- Details:
 - Aggressively identify and pursue available federal, state, and private grants and other funding specifically targeting broadband connectivity (e.g. Rural Digital Opportunity Fund).
 - 50% tax credit payable after CY22 for connectivity options made available to rural residents. This would be an incentive for private industry to speed up Internet access.
 - A very small, limited fee on telecommunications users to assist in the payment for last-mile connectivity infrastructure.
- Recommendation #5
 - Brief Description: Promote opportunities which encourage more rapid, widespread adoption of broadband technologies
 - Intended Audience: State Government, Local Governments, Telecom Partners, Residents, and Businesses
 - Recommendation Type: Funding, Governance, Process, and Policy
 - Details:
 - Recruit, or encourage expansion of, companies with well-paying “remote work” opportunities.
 - Increase both public-sector and private-sector adoption of “remote work” opportunities for pre-COVID traditional “in-office” roles.
 - Education (Pre-school, K-12, and higher education) should align their focus to produce stronger STEM student and graduate populations, prepared to succeed in the workplace of the future.
 - Further educate the end users to become active subscribers and users of the expanded services as they come on line.
- Dr. Janet Pope expanded on recommendation #1: Use Cares Act Funds for LONI System to make broadband access available to schools in rural communities. She asked that the language for this recommendation be modified to include options available, in order to maintain local autonomy. She also referenced Senator Fields’ legislative bill regarding LONI and the opportunity to opt in.
- Dr. Reed asked for discussion on recommendation #4: Dr. Reed asked the Task Force to weigh in on whether the recommendation should contain such specific parameters on financing and other issues. Mr. Jason Drodgy stated that the subgroup was attempting to create an incentive structure to shrink the BEL Commission timeline for expanding broadband access, but that this degree of specificity is not needed. Ms. Schowen recommended revising the language to “explore options to financially incentivize private industry to speed up internet access and explore options to assist in the payment of last-mile connectivity infrastructure.”

- Dr. Reed asked for a motion to approve the recommendations of the Digital Divide subgroup, as amended, with staff to forward the modified recommendations to the Task Force for final review.
 - On motion of Mr. Wayne Denley, seconded by Dr. Kenya Messer, the Task Force voted unanimously to approve the recommendations of the Digital Divide subgroup, as amended, with staff to forward the updated recommendations to the Resilient Louisiana Commission: Education Workforce Taskforce.
- Wrap-up, closing remarks and adjournment
 - Dr. Reed stated that additional recommendations, drafted by Ms. Schowen, will be sent out to the Task Force via email once internal review is complete. This schedule will provide time for members to review carefully and for the subgroups to prepare to present next week. Once the recommendations and report are finalized, they will be forwarded to the RLC. The Governor is expected to receive the RLC's full report on July 1, 2020.
 - The next meeting for the Education Workforce Task Force will be Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at noon.
 - On motion of Ms. Brittany Major, Dr. Reed adjourned the meeting at 2:07 p.m.