



RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION

CO-CHAIR DON PIERSON

CO-CHAIR TERRIE STERLING

Education and Workforce Task Force

June 3, 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
- Julie Cherry
- Camille Conaway
- Wayne Denley
- Hannah Dietsch
- Jason Droddy (Tom Galligan)
- John Fraboni
- Paul Helton
- Brittany Major
- Kenya Messer
- Paula Polito
- Monty Sullivan
- Angie White
- Stephen Toups

- Call to Order, Roll Call and Certification for Lack of Quorum
 - Ms. Ava Dejoie called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. and Dr. Shanta Proctor
 - Dr. Vosper established a quorum in accordance with Governor John Bel Edwards' Executive Proclamation 2020-41.
- Welcome by Co-Chairs
 - Ms. Ava Dejoie welcomed everyone to the sixth Education Workforce Taskforce meeting. She stated that the Task Force is charged with analyzing information to respond to the needs that have evolved during the crisis, being proactive in our approach, and informing and contributing to the development of a long-term and comprehensive strategy for a more resilient economy in the future.
 - Dr. Reed thanked Task Force members and Governor's subcabinet members for their participation and reminded the public that they are encouraged to share any comments via email at resilientlouisiana@la.gov or by calling 888-204-5984, code 1755460#. This information is on the agenda and posted to the website.
 - Ms. Susie Schowen informed the Task Force and sub-cabinet partners that the Resilient Louisiana Commission (RLC) has been considering ways to elevate priorities around equity and access, which are essential to the work of the Task Force in Louisiana. National events over the past few days have emphasized the importance of those considerations, and as a result the RLC is offering a one-week extension to the due date for the report on recommendations. The RLC is asking the Task Force to address a series of framing questions that will be released on Thursday, June 4, to aid in identifying outcomes and metrics for the recommendations relative to their impact on equity, and how each recommendation pertains to the person, the family, and Louisiana. As recommendations are circulated, Task Force members are asked to pay special attention to the impact on equity and revise and add to recommendations as needed.
 - Ms. Dejoie stated that the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), including Dr. Ali Bustamante, have been surveying a group of employers who have either completed incumbent worker training grants this month, or who had contracts for expanding their workforce and creating new jobs. The LWC is launching a survey for all employers currently registered in the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund system with a particular focus on those who are expanding, and additional group suggestions are welcome. A number of universities are also partnering with LWC around this effort. Several task force members offered assistance is pushing the survey out broadly across the state.
- Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
 - Dr. Reed asked for approval of the minutes from the May 27, 2020 meeting of the Resilient Louisiana: Education Workforce Task Force.
 - Motion by Ms. Julie Cherry, seconded by Mr. Bruce Busada, the Task Force voted unanimously to accept the minutes from the May 27, 2020 meeting of the Resilient Louisiana: Education Workforce Task Force.

- Public Comments
 - No public comments were submitted.
- Update from the LWC on Unemployment with Q&A
 - Ms. Dejoie welcomed Dr. Ali Bustamante, who began his presentation with a series of graphics:
 - Louisiana Monthly Unemployment Rate: January 1976 – April 2020 contextualizes a historic level of unemployment, including the unemployment level and the unemployment rate of 14.5%. This falls slightly below the 14.7% national rate and he noted that Louisiana is following the same national average trajectory.
 - Louisiana Weekly Unemployment Benefits Payments: March 7 – May 23, 2020 depicts weekly benefits payments that the Louisiana Workforce Commission is paying out on a weekly basis since March 2020. The LWC has paid out over \$2.5B as 516,000 claims were processed; this provides a sense of the earnings lost and not replaced. It also reflects the injection of income that has been provided to the unemployed in order to maintain consumption, particularly for basic needs.
 - Louisiana Weekly Continued Claims Growth by Industry (March 14 – May 23, 2020) – Vulnerable Industries: Vulnerable industries are reflected in continued claims, which is a sign of how quickly our economy will recover. The pain of layoffs occurred in early April, and we were able to determine how many people are currently sustained on unemployment compensation weekly. We have flattened that curve over the past couple of weeks. The most vulnerable industries are those that actually face the greatest increases in unemployment compensation claims. There is evidence of slight declines in accommodation and food services as well as arts, entertainment, and recreation. Many workers are actually being reemployed and are no longer collecting unemployment benefits. Retail, educational services, and healthcare and social assistance are also flattening the curve, with a downward trajectory over the past couple of weeks. This is a very promising sign that hints to a potential recovery going into Phase II starting on June 5.
 - Louisiana Weekly Continued Claims Growth by Industry (March 14 – May 23, 2020) – Sensitive Industries: Sensitive industries have had moderate increases of unemployment compensation claims since the pandemic began, but the curve is actually flattening. Unfortunately, mining is experiencing an increase as the price of oil has not recovered. The information, administrative and waste services industries require additional attention relative to practices and structure to mediate the gains that we are seeing when it comes to increasing sustainability of their continued claims.

- Louisiana Weekly Continued Claims Growth by Industry (March 14 – May 23, 2020) – Resilient Industries: Resilient industries remain stable and show a flattening curve. However, finance and insurance, utilities and, unfortunately to a greater extent, manufacturing are showing increases. Manufacturing can potentially lag in the face of immediate shocks. In conclusion, the economy is experiencing an overall flattening of the curve and recovery is underway.
- In response to Dr. Bustamante’s presentation, Ms. Camille Conaway stated that employers whose Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds have been utilized over the last few weeks were able to recall employees, especially in the hospitality industry. As Phase II moves forward with a 50% capacity, combined with the end of the PPP, a number of smaller businesses are concerned about their ability to sustain 100% of employment on a 50% operating mechanism. She stated that we must be cautious about the consequences of the artificial PPP prop running out and that additional summer layoffs are predicted. Congress provided an extension for most businesses that adhere to the guidelines; however, many already spent six or seven weeks of their eight-week allocation.
- Dr. Monty Sullivan asked Ms. Dejoie if there is a Department of Labor or Congressional perspective on a potential extension of current unemployment benefits and, if so, what the implications are for the data. Ms. Dejoie stated that the LWC does not anticipate any extension beyond the current 12 weeks. Louisiana’s unemployment benefits last 26 weeks at a rate of \$247/week. Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) is taken from a pool of funding made available to 1099 and gig workers. This PUA is one of two entry points providing eligibility for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation at the current rate of \$600/week. Based on information from the National Governors Association and U.S. Department of Labor, we do not anticipate any new unemployment benefits packages. A program called Federal Emergency Pandemic Unemployment Compensation allows for an additional 13 weeks of benefits beyond Louisiana’s maximum benefit allowance, but the rate is Louisiana’s maximum weekly benefit of \$247, rather than \$600. This will last thirteen weeks for every state, as stated in the first iteration of the CARES Act. The LWC can project a person’s lapse in benefits based on when benefits started. To obtain average trends, we are evaluating the number of people on benefits and the number of weeks. Reemployment has not stopped and the LWC is profiling individuals by reaching out to approximately 2,000 people per week in this initial phase, before work search is implemented.

- Presentation by Alex Ruder, Community and Economic Development (CED) Advisor at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta
 - Dr. Reed introduced Dr. Alex Ruder from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. He had presented information to the RLC last Friday on the Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF) dashboard, an asset focused on workforce development, and the RLC wanted to ensure that the Education Workforce Task Force had the benefit of hearing from Dr. Ruder directly.
 - Dr. Ruder, accompanied by Dr. David Altig in Atlanta, and Ms. Adrienne Slack and Ms. Rebekah Durham in New Orleans, began his presentation with a series of graphics on the CLIFF Dashboard. Dr. Ruder stated that the broad motivation is to set the stage and build on statistics provided by Dr. Bustamante, and information on the recession, job loss across industries, and the efforts of the workforce and education system to implement training opportunities. The primary motivation is to make a compelling case to workers to utilize short-term training opportunities to get people back into the labor market quickly; a secondary motivation is that the safety net enrollment of public benefits is climbing. The CLIFF tool captures how those benefits interact with the career pathways built for workers. As a person begins to earn more money, he starts to lose public benefits and eligibility for safety net programs, which results in a benefits cliff. A benefits cliff means your earnings gains are offset by potential losses. The CLIFF tool can precisely identify which career paths and occupations are of greatest interest to Louisiana, and then very clearly show four different types of workers and what career pathways are going to offer the greatest opportunity for economic self-sufficiency and stability.
 - Dr. Ruder highlighted their three principles of planning: (1) the social safety net has the potential to support workers in times of economic challenge as they transition into job training and in-demand jobs with promising career paths; (2) training opportunities must support local industry and allow workers to have career paths that allow them to be economically self-sufficient; and (3) both policy innovations at the state and local level and a coordinated service delivery approach across different state agencies and non-profits in the community can help mitigate many of these challenges, particularly for lower-income workers with employment barriers. The equity frame mentioned in the opening remarks can truly mitigate the economic challenges.
 - Dr. Ruder provided a dashboard presentation demonstrating an approach to career pathways and frameworks. With a series of graphics, he illustrated a hypothetical displaced worker searching for a career. The

CLIFF tool measures workforce development regions, key populations, in-demand occupations, target industries, basic expenses, public benefits, gains, losses, annual net financial resources, disposable income, taxes, complex and unpredictable paths, and high financial insecurity and instability, providing a complete financial forecast relative to job interests and career pathways. The CLIFF tool provides a metric for many different scenarios and has become a forecasting tool from both the counselor and client perspectives. It can help inform Louisiana's planning efforts as the state builds out a recovery strategy for all workers, particularly those using public benefits to meet basic expenses. He noted that research indicates that it is very hard for workers and counselors to forecast losses and it is often distressing to workers to learn they are losing benefits.

- Dr. Ruder noted that an interest for the policymaker audience is the taxes workers will pay as they move up career pathways. An obvious interest is that higher earnings yield higher tax payments, but it is also possible to calculate the net gain to the State and taxpayers of career advancement policies, both in total and for every career path. Two important things are happening as a result of career advancement: (1) workers are paying more taxes, and (2) workers will consume fewer safety net and public benefits.
- Dr. Ruder concluded his presentation by highlighting the power of the CLIFF tool to inform the planning process and the counseling process. This tool has been customized for other partners and a customized tool could be developed to support Louisiana's work going forward if the framework is of interest to the Education Workforce Task Force and the RLC.
 - Question: First, is there way to frame net benefit in terms of savings in tax expenditures for benefits and net contribution as a taxpayer rather than a non-taxpayer?
 - Dr. Ruder stated that:
 - (1) factoring public benefits
 - (2) adding every year that a worker is paying taxes in a career pathway
 - (3) combining state and federal taxes that the worker pays
 - (4) adding the taxes, the employer will pay for that worker, including state sales tax (if it is a state with sales tax) and income tax (state and federal)
 - (5) adding the standard payroll
 - (6) taking those quantities into short-term, medium-term, and lifetime perspectives, the net

would be the total taxes paid out over that lifetime minus the total benefits that the worker received.

- The second part of Dr. Sullivan’s question focused on thoughts regarding moving people away from a CNA based on the mindset that a CNA is not valuable enough on its own? In addition, what perspective and commentary can be provided around the notion that training and education can be an iterative process with multiple certifications rather than a single point of completion? Dr. Ruder stated that CNA is still considered a good entry-level position into the healthcare field in that it provides a doorway to the profession. However, he stated that there are significant concerns about high turnover in the occupation, low pay, and difficulties encouraging workers to move beyond the CNA job. Statistics show that the percentage of CNA workers who do move on is quite low, as it is not easy to re-enroll in a school program to get to the LPN due to limited financial resources. A strong collaborative program with employers or a college that is able to embed the LPN or other healthcare credential as part of its programs, may have more success.
 - Dr. Reed stated that the availability of sound, granular information to inform decision-making and the ability to articulate the return on investment, to help individuals navigate through career pathways armed with good consumer information, is very powerful. She also inquired about the length of time needed to build a customized model.
- Partner update from DCFS and Implications for Education and Workforce with Q&A
 - Dr. Reed introduced Ms. Terri Ricks, Deputy Secretary for the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), to share the work of the agency aligned to the work of the task force. Ms. Ricks, her team and the Secretary have been at the table as Louisiana has been thinking purposefully about how to leverage public benefits to aid in credential completion and employment, and to utilize benefits as a tool to aid in building a more prosperous and resilient Louisiana.
 - Ms. Ricks began her presentation with a series of graphics providing an overview of the work of DCFS and their family-support programs. She stated that the mission of DCFS is to help families become prosperous, not just self-sufficient.
 - Ms. Ricks stated that approximately 7,000 children are served annually in foster care due to neglect; however, many more children are served in the homes to prevent foster care. Child support is being collected in the amount of \$437M.

- Ms. Shavana Howard, Assistant Secretary of Family Support, provided information on record-breaking SNAP applications as a result of the pandemic and she highlighted the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program, offering an additional benefit separate from SNAP and providing food benefits in place of breakfast and lunch that children receive at school.
- Ms. Ricks stated that Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) provides cash support to needy families and that Louisiana received \$163.4M in TANF Funding in FY20. Ms. Ricks mentioned that Ms. Howard is leading the charge in moving to a coaching model, which recognizes the impacts of poverty and stress on executive functioning. As a result, DCFS is transitioning into a new way of service delivery, observing the way TANF is used for connectivity, and closing the digital divide to ensure that DCFS is equitably reaching people and giving them what they need.
- DCFS is re-engineering its approach to workforce development to fuel the Prosperity Pipeline through the following activities, which have contributed to USDA FNS recently naming Louisiana a “SNAP to Skills” state:
 - Connecting DCFS ed to the Louisiana Talent Imperative;
 - Re-tooling Strategies to Empower People (STEP) program (requesting 40 T.O. -- 100% federally funded); and
 - Expanding SNAP Employment & Training program (SNAP E&T) through federal reimbursements (requesting 5 T.O. -- 100% federally funded);
- Ms. Ricks told the Task Force that SNAP employment and training is an uncapped federal resource used to train SNAP recipients in private, nonprofit, governmental, and higher education institutions. The program provides federal reimbursements to organizations offering career services to SNAP recipients:
 - Works on a goal to move SNAP recipients into meaningful-wage employment;
 - Includes 17 providers currently under contract and 11 participating community-based organizations;
 - Is partnering with LCTCS; and
 - Has an operating budget of \$2.3 million (\$0 budget in 2016)
- Sub-group Report-outs, Updates and Recommendations Review with Discussion
 - Dr. Reed introduced Ms. Susie Schowen and asked her to facilitate the discussion. Ms. Schowen asked Ms. Angie White to start with her subgroup report.
 - Ms. White indicated that the sub-group had spoken with regional economic development organization representatives about workforce

initiatives and resiliency skills that extend beyond COVID-19, such as automation replacing jobs, and explored the critical question of ways to better inform individuals whose jobs will not come back quickly of the kinds of careers that have a trajectory of short-term training to immediate employment, leading to additional training to make them more resilient. The sub-group is considering conducting outreach for each regional economic development organization by providing a portfolio to the Manufacturing Managers Council of the training programs for manufacturing that exists in our region. There is consideration of outreach to inform four-year universities, not just LCTCS, of this kind of incremental skills training. There are initiatives around post-baccalaureate certificates, which can enhance the diploma of someone graduating. The sub-group questioned who was making progress with work-based training initiatives, such as apprenticeships, because that can be a focus of federal training dollars and another option for employees and job seekers to pursue career pathways to make themselves more valuable and more resilient. Ms. White suggested developing a consortium of employers with similar occupations, job titles, and skills and a streamlined mechanism for connecting them to community and technical colleges. We cannot miss opportunities for federal training dollars she stated.

- Mr. Busada stated that he has been in contact with the businesses in each region and the chairmen of each of the workforce investment boards, who are business owners. Contacts have been both individual and in groups. His group is also reaching out to economic development areas in each region, so sub-groups should be sure there is not duplication of efforts around items already addressed. In response, Dr. Reed agreed that we should avoid duplication and maximize opportunities to support and build on each other's work, citing engagement with Dr. Bustamante regarding the survey as an example.
- Mr. Paul Helton provided an update on the digital divide, stating that he and Wayne Denley's conversations remain focused on the digital sector and the previous recommendations of the IT and Communications Task Force, with special attention to LONI, the BEL Commission and the important issue of cybersecurity. Mr. Denley stated that one of the items on the broadband access was mapping by state, which was already delineated in the BEL Commission's agenda and action items.
- Mr. Busada asked the Task Force if Louisiana was receiving some of the millions of dollars in federal grant money to fund broadband. Dr. Reed responded that the Division of Administration is looking at all of the available pots of money that can be used. The FCC has also announced

significant funding focused on updating the maps and broadband. There is a strong hope that through of this tragedy Louisiana can come much closer to solving its digital divide challenge.

- Ms. Paula Polito provided an update on Early Childhood, stating that there is a tremendous amount of equity already embedded in our childcare work. There is a very robust accountability system as well as the sub-group's recommendations around funding: the more funding we can get, the more access can be increased. The accountability system in place has research-based tools used in all child care type III centers, so funding increases will increase placements of children in high-quality seats. That is the goal.
- Next Steps, Timelines and Reporting
 - Ms. Showen reminded the Task Force that it has an extra week to complete recommendations due to the Resilient Louisiana Commission (RLC). All issues should be considered through the lens of equity and answering questions about how recommendations impact equity for the individual, the family, and the state. The RLC will use a review process and will ask questions of co-chairs in a public meeting, so we must ensure that we are adequately prepared.
 - Ms. Doretha Bennett voiced concerns and asked for a framework allowing for a better referral system, prevention of duplication, and cross-training of staff. Her biggest concern is common intake and reduction of paperwork needed to release funds for training programs and collaboration with partners and service providers. Job seekers and participants deserve a seamless process to receive the services provided and we must mitigate these challenges to create a system of process improvement she stated.
 - Dr. Reed thanked Ms. Bennet for her comments and stated that part of this work is taking the time to landscape barriers, recognize and see the reasons for duplication, and understand rules and regulations. This challenge to think about streamlining process improvement, collaboration and our responsibility for state vision is important. The work of this Task Force will help us tremendously.
 - Ms. Dejoie stated that she is impressed with the integration of and collaboration with all of our higher education partners, training providers, both public and private, and employers related to on-the-job-training. The very rural areas of Louisiana have received substantial support from local workforce development boards and employers. The healthcare initiative has now been recognized as a national best practice. Ms. Dejoie suggested scheduling a time at the next meeting to allow local workforce

- boards to present to the Task Force on how they operate and best practices.
- Ms. Schowen stated that was a good idea and noted that part of the challenge is that when mapping out best practices, we do not have full visibility from all partner levels on what is happening collaboratively, as well as at local and regional levels. She identified two essential components relative to recommendations: (1) getting complete state alignment across partners about roles, where the money is, how it should be flowing, where our metrics need to be aligning, where we need to be collaborating, etc.; and (2) understanding what is working best in each region and what each region can learn from others, as well as making sure all the gaps are filled within these collaborations.
- Wrap-up, Closing Remarks and Adjournment
 - Dr. Reed provided closing remarks, stating that the homework is to consider the recommendations through an equity frame, to provide any updates or revisions, and to look for places in which synergy and coordination will drive amazing work.
 - The next meeting for the Education and Workforce Task Force will be Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at noon.
 - On motion of Mr. Busada, Dr. Reed adjourned the meeting at 1:54 p.m.