

The background is a complex, low-poly geometric pattern. It features a color palette of warm tones, including various shades of brown, tan, yellow, orange, and red. A faint, light-colored map of the state of Louisiana is visible in the upper-left quadrant, serving as a subtle watermark or background element. The overall aesthetic is modern and textured.

Equity: The Superior Growth Model

Presentation to Resilient Louisiana Commission

Friday, June 26, 2020

OUR CHARGE.

Our charge as it relates to equity in resilience is to make recommendations that prioritize, change and sustain outcomes vulnerable populations.

OUR METHODOLOGY.

- Reviewed all 15 reports and recommendations from Commission's task forces with lens of equity;
- Identified cross-cutting themes that emerged from the findings of the task forces; and
- Developed initial, high level recommendations for the Commission's consideration that will be discussed and finalized in collaboration with task force leaders.

Equity is the just and fair inclusion into a society in which everyone can participate and prosper.

EQUITY.



RATIONALE.

To secure Louisiana's future in the face of the health and economic challenges we've faced, Louisiana needs a **new growth model**—one that builds on our assets, leaves the generations to come with a strong foundation for the future, and brings us closer to the ideal of prosperity for all.

Source: PolicyLink

WHAT IS THE CURRENT MODEL PRODUCING IN LA?

LOUISIANA HAS:

- 2nd Highest Poverty Rate
- 3rd Highest Child Poverty Rate
- 4th Lowest Median Household Income
- 2nd Highest Income Inequality

IN THE UNITED STATES





RATIONALE.

Equity is that new growth model. Achieving equity requires erasing social and geographic disparities in opportunities and outcomes. Equity is not only a matter of social justice or morality: **It is an economic necessity.**

Source: PolicyLink

WHAT IS THE CURRENT MODEL PRODUCING IN LA?

LOUISIANA IS:

49th in the nation on a test of college
readiness called the ACT
49th in Child Well-Being
IN THE UNITED STATES



WHAT IS THE CURRENT MODEL PRODUCING IN LA?

48th in Infectious Diseases.

44th in Cancer.

46th in Cardiovascular Diseases.

47th in Diabetes.

50th in Behaviors.

50th in Community and Environmental Factors.

WE NEED A NEW MODEL.



A GROWTH MODEL DRIVEN BY EQUITY.

BRINGING GROWTH AND EQUITY TOGETHER.

An equity-driven growth model would **bring together two agendas that have traditionally been separate:**

GROWTH: Growing new jobs and bolster long-term competitiveness



EQUITY: Ensure that all—especially low-income people, rural people, people of color and other vulnerable groups —have the opportunity to benefit from and co-create that growth

Equity and growth need each other more than ever.



WHAT DID OUR TASK FORCES SAY?

NOTE: Highlights are by topic, not by sector.

EDUCATION

If we were a more highly-educated state, with a more diverse economy, **the economic impact of this health crisis on Louisiana would be much different**. The state as a whole should maintain a strong focus on the Louisiana Board of Regents' Master Plan attainment goals during this time.

Education and training programs should **include pathways for under-educated and formerly-incarcerated** residents. As of 2015, nearly 50% of Louisiana's working adults were disconnected from employment opportunities due to lack of skills and/or education. Neither our economy nor our state can thrive without engaging a greater percentage of our workforce.

WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

TASK FORCE EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS.

SMALL
BUSINESS

Support policies that encourage private investment in small businesses. Similar to other proven policies, the **private sector can be a critical partner to taking our small businesses off of life support** by leveraging proven federal programs and capital.

Louisiana should **tap into an existing network of federally licensed Small Business Investment Companies and Rural Business Investment Companies**, who are certified with the singular mission of growing our nation's small businesses.

SMALL
BUSINESS

TASK FORCE EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS.

If poverty was a city, it would be the biggest in the state by a factor of 2. But the problem is much broader. The United Way's ALICE report (Asset Limited, Income Constrained and Employed) estimates that 48% of households don't earn enough to meet the cost of living in their parish. That's largely because two-thirds of the jobs in Louisiana pay below \$20 an hour. Louisiana should look to increase incomes of low-paid workers, either **by enhancing the state's Earned Income Tax Credit or by establishing a minimum wage higher than the federal \$7.25** threshold currently in effect.

Utilize CDBG, Project Based Section 8, Tax-Exempt Bonds, and any other financial resources available to Louisiana agencies to **support the creation and retention of mixed-income housing and affordable housing for seniors and other vulnerable populations.** Funding should prioritize properties owned by Housing Authorities, State and Local Governments, blighted or abandoned properties, and other necessary, impactful, shovel-ready developments that can be undertaken via public private partnerships.

TASK FORCE EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS.

Expand the Enterprise Zone Tax Credit for use by small businesses in the hospitality industry, including restaurants and hotels, and other hard-hit industries.

We recommend that CARES Act or future federal stimulus funding be utilized to **leverage private capital**, or an **incentive that incorporates best practices and principles**, also mandating that the **private sector match** public funding with private capital and invest in our state's small businesses, perhaps only in low-income and severely distressed communities or opportunity zones.

Determine strategies **to establish safety nets, educational opportunities and support programs** (i.e. flexible work schedules, certifications, scholarships, childcare) that assist travel industry workers in reaching their full potential. These steps should **improve the workers quality of life** and chances for a **higher living wage**, thereby seeing a larger return on the investment of resources to the worker and the community over time.

TASK FORCE EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS.

Provide **incentives for small businesses to complete necessary retrofitting for COVID-19**. As an incentive for Louisiana small businesses to retrofit operations to ensure a healthy and safe environment for employees, Louisiana residents and tourists, assess potential incentive models that provide small businesses the necessary cost-saving measures to retrofit their businesses to a safe and touch free environment – doors, sinks, toilets, payment methods, etc.

Nostalgia makes for good memories and contributes to a strong sense of place, but it **makes bad public policy**. The direction of this work is **unapologetically forward**.

Clear the entrepreneurial path by creating better, easier paths to business creation, reducing licensing requirements (Louisiana is tied with Washington for the highest number of licensed occupations), increasing awareness of barriers to entrepreneurial action, and appointing a state Chief Entrepreneurship Officer to work across agency lines to make Louisiana a more entrepreneur-friendly state.

TASK FORCE EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS.

HEALTH
EQUITY

The average age of patients diagnosed with the coronavirus is 74 years and more than sixty percent of deaths in Louisiana were 65 or older. **Exacerbated by the long-standing health inequities in the state, 50% of COVID-19 deaths in Louisiana were African American.**

A large percentage of **travel industry workers are minorities and others on the lower end of Louisiana's economic spectrum.** This virus has more widely affected and exposed the needs that exist for this vulnerable part of our population. **Additional equity conversations, research, education and resulting strategies must be immediately conducted, created, and implemented** for true resiliency to form in every economic sector, especially including the hospitality and tourism sector.

TOURISM &
WAGES

TASK FORCE EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS.

A systematic approach and set of recommendations addressing equity related to **the digital divide** as well as diversity and inclusion in the IT sector **is critical to the resilience of Louisiana**. Working to correct systemic inequities is both a moral imperative and a superior growth strategy that will benefit the entire state.

We have to focus on solving the remaining problem **of connecting those that do not have internet available and redouble our efforts to address the “adoption” problem we face in Louisiana**. Based on data from the FCC, the share of Americans who have access to fixed broadband but do not subscribe is about five times the share without access to broadband.

TASK FORCE EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS.

To truly make a long-term recovery, **we must make people our priority and be honest about racial and ethnic discrimination in the delivery of infrastructure.** A more robust and intentional inclusion policy is essential. We should determine if any anti-discrimination policies exist in transportation infrastructure that create barriers to opportunity; begin to track data relative to inclusion, beyond the construction industry; provide support and resources for small and emerging business in the transportation sector; and determine if mobility services are delivering fair and balanced practices such as access.

There is an opportunity to **enhance vegetable and fruit farming and also help disparities in communities** that have food deserts...[there is] the need for small-scale packing houses for fruit and vegetable growers which can be done collectively as a **farmer's cooperative**, thus allowing someone to grow a product and get it into the retail supply chain.

TASK FORCE EQUITY HIGHLIGHTS.



CROSS / CUTTING THEMES



**CROSS-
CUTTING
THEMES.**

- **EDUCATION**
- **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
- **SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH**
- **WAGES**
- **HOUSING**
- **FOOD SECURITY**
- **BROADBAND & DIGITAL DIVIDE**
- **HEALTH INVESTMENTS BEYOND
CLINICAL BOUNDARIES**



RECOMMENDATIONS & THE PATH FORWARD.

EDUCATE ALL ON EQUITY IN RESILIENCE.

For “growth” and “equity” to come together, all will need to **stretch outside of their comfort zones**. Equity concerns should be accounted for and resources should be made available when needed to address inequities, including modes of participation and communication.

Private-sector leaders will need to embrace and prioritize equity concerns, and equity-oriented voices need to join traditional business and economic growth forums.

Growth advocates will need to stop seeing equity as something that hopefully trickles down from their efforts to attract and grow businesses, and recognize that racial, gender and economic inclusion will help them achieve their primary goals of growth and competitiveness.

Equity advocates, who have traditionally focused on how the benefits of growth are divvied up, will need to concentrate more on generating job growth, and choose strategies that work with market forces to reach their equity goals.



RECOMMENDATIONS & THE PATH FORWARD.

CREATE A PLACE WHERE EQUITY LIVES.

Specific, measurable objectives should be created for each cross-cutting equity theme. Those measurable objectives should be **prioritized in collaboration with the task forces and tracked** through a newly created statewide Office of Social Equity that will focus its efforts on engaging in methods to prevent and reduce systemic inequities identified by the task forces and other equity stakeholders.

The Office of Social Equity should also be responsible for **measuring Louisiana's equity/social vulnerability** by assessing whether our communities have the necessary infrastructure to assist our most vulnerable, especially in times of crisis.

The Office of Social Equity should also be responsible for employing the **"equity lens"** and ensuring that the principles of equity are embedded in decision-making and policy-making. **The voice of equity should be at every table, and in every room.**



RECOMMENDATIONS & THE PATH FORWARD.

COMMIT TO TRACKING METRICS THAT INFORM EQUITY OUTCOMES.

For equity-driven growth to become the reality, leaders must **prioritize, track, and measure racial, gender and economic inclusion** alongside traditional measures of economic growth. Through the use of **sector equity report cards**, equity advocates will also need to hold policymakers accountable for the consequences of their policies, monitoring them for decisions that may—intentionally or unintentionally—push different groups away from each other and widen current economic and social divides.

We must examine inequities through data-driven research using available data sources and technologies. To accomplish this, we must ensure that **Louisiana collects meaningful data** (i.e. data by race, ethnicity, gender, disability, ZIP code, etc.), and make the data publicly available.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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