



RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION

Retail and Small Business Recovery Task Force

May 4, 2020

Meeting Commenced: 9:30 a.m.

Task Force Members Present

- Jessica Elliott
- Mayra Pineda
- Christine Bruneau
- Kelisha Garrett
- Chad Bordelon
- Shawn Brayton
- Jaqueline Brettner
- Trevelayn L Brown
- Brittany Dunn
- Brian Egana
- Edward Encalarde
- Nicholas Felton
- Aaron Franklin
- James Gobert
- Todd Grand
- Edward Harold
- Lisa Johnson
- Jerry W. Jones, Jr.
- Michael Lafitte
- Manard Lagasse, Jr.
- Andrew Lam
- Van Lam
- Teresa Lawrence
- Ryan Leblanc
- Edwin Neill
- Li Pham
- Angelica Rivera
- Blanca Robinson
- Allison Rouse Royster
- Maria Slater
- Ronnie Slone
- Belinda Zhou

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- The meeting was called to order by Kelisha Garrett and roll call taken by Mayra Pineda. All task force members were present.
- Kelisha Garrett certified that a quorum was present.
- Jessica Elliott discussed subcommittees and membership
 - Retail and big box – Jessica Elliott will lead
 - Small business – Kelisha will lead
 - Microbusiness – Mayra Pineda and Christine Changho Bruneau will lead.

If any member believes they need to change subcommittees, please send an e-mail.

- Kelisha Garrett: immediate task force needs, and through the summer. Proposed topics for handling:
 - Access to capital/funding streams: use of PPP and operating revenue needed to maintain business;
 - Regulatory changes in business occupancy: limitations on number of customers/clientele, reduction in profitability, impact on operations, additional marketing funding and signage needed, PPE requirements and cost effect;
 - Additional operating expenses: inflated PPE costs, facilities maintenance (e.g., consistent cleaning), hazard pay, increase in insurance premiums, liabilities from law suits, rent reprieve/reductions/subsidies;
 - Coordination of opening across parish lines for multiple locations;
 - Industry-specific impact for cultural, oil and gas businesses: cancellations of events or cyclical business interruption (e.g., festivals, event space, AV companies, bed & breakfast, AirBnB, etc.)
 - Offset in employee salaries/staffing needs
 - Funding gaps: additional credit and loan consolidations of prior debt service (reduce interest payments)
- The meeting was then opened for questions:

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- Britney Dunn stated that minority businesses having issues with funding because generally operating out of compliance (e.g., document retention, business form/entity, payroll v. profit compensation). She would like to see some type of program to assist with both funding and compliance retention. Additionally, currently advising clients who do receive PPP funds to deposit in separate bank accounts in case required to prove compliance.
- Jessica Elliott had also received many questions regarding questions about compliance. Documentation important, need to focus on that in task force report.
- Kelisha Garrett asked if committee members saw that topics need to be addressed not on the list?
- Edwin Neill stated that, for salons, concerns for PPE access to keep employees, customers safe.
- Kelisha Garrett said that will definitely be addressed, including proposed costs of PPE that might significantly impact, particularly, smaller business
- A question was raised regarding the distinction between small business versus micro-business: Microbusinesses generally have 1, 5, 10 employees; maybe a sole proprietor with no employees who might not take payroll and get "paid" from profit. How do we ensure we are not leaving them behind?
- Dorien Nunez requested a statement and the signature of every task force member that puts health over profits, especially considering the impact on small and local business, especially minority businesses. Further calls for diversity and inclusion in every task force, in administration of resources, procurement.
- Kelisha Garrett said that the health and safety, local business promotion, access to resources and capital, especially as it affects minority and small businesses, are primary bases for our task force.

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- Mayra Pineda reminded task force that this work is just preparation, and that the task force will certainly follow the lead of the governor.
- Participant (225) 993-7850: raised question of the Cosmetology Board's guidelines. Kelisha Garrett responded that this information was currently being gathered to put out that recommendation.
- Kelisha Garrett: Subcommittee chairs will reach out today with a proposed schedule of what we want to receive to put out next Monday. Please send e-mails with any recommendations and information to be considered. Acknowledged that we are working on a tight timeline. If proposed phased opening as planned, if statistics show that we can reopen on May 15th, we need to be ready. Resilientlouisiana@la.gov.
- Chad Bordelon asked if there were any recommendations for those who have already received the PPP loans in light of mayor's cancellation of events for remainder of the year?
- Restaurants cannot make payroll, open dining rooms because of cost.
- Participant (225) 444-1351 asked where are folks going to find employees if unemployment is available through the end of July? Funds amount to about \$20/hour. Most restaurant employees don't make that.
- Secretary Pierson: PPP funds come directly from Washington so the state cannot really change that – issue for the Congressional delegation to consider. Regarding unemployment, funds are for people who are unable to be employed. Thus, if a job is reoffered, that puts the worker in jeopardy because of the required weekly certification of unemployability. Certainly a complex issue.
- Lisa Johnson: small retail business example. Employees not coming back, restaurants as well, due to safety concerns.

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- Kelisha Garrett stated that they will reach out and get some clarity. Could be an ethical issue, could be a safety consideration. We should get some guidance on length of time to comply with recommendations/requirements.
- Andrew Doss stated that the Resilient Louisiana Commission is going to try to issue interim report very soon with immediate recommendations. For the task force: what are the most immediate things in front of us that the Governor should be aware? He will have a template and more information to accomplish that as the week progresses.
- Tim Temple asked about retailers, and what is availability of required PPE for employees?
- Kelisha Garrett stated that this is one of the things they were discussing. We will make recommendations on how to make those attainable for small businesses and their employees. Although some municipalities have offered a central source for PPE, the availability of statewide access is not yet clear.
- Jessica Elliott shared that she already received reports of challenges and questions - "where do I get this?" – especially mid-sized and smaller stores without ready access to PPE. May 1st requirements are at least very loose – just facial covering. Available PPE are also widely variant in prices.
- Jessica Elliot read through the subcommittee member appointments.
- Dorien Nunez asked if committee members' names and contact information will be available to all. Secretary Pierson and Andrew Doss explained that task force member names will be public but inquiring persons will have to obtain contact information on their own.

Meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

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Immediate concerns summarized:

- Simple guidelines for acceptable requirements for masks
- Are we adopting the CDC guidelines for cleaning inside of business locations?
- Legislation or liability of business owner re: employees and customers
- Centralized PPE supply or supplier for barriers needed to protect employees
- Use of PPP funds – length of time allowed vs. the phase I reopening order
- Temporary licensure for alternate operation – i.e., business pre-Covid operated as a bar – post-Covid operating as small kitchen/restaurant or transitioning

This meeting was conducted via Zoom video conference and teleconference.

Video and audio were recorded.

Minutes recorded by Christine Changho Bruneau

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