Appendix

Comprehensive Game Plan for a More Resilient Louisiana

Introduction

This appendix encompasses the detailed findings, recommendations and hard work of the 15 Resilient Louisiana Commission (RLC) Task Forces. Each Task Force was asked to carry out a short- and longer-term evaluation of its industry sector in a systematic and structured framework as identified below, and most Task Force reports follow this format. Also included in some sections of the Task Force reports is supplemental documentation that provides context and justification for the recommendations made.

It is important to recognize that the Task Force recommendations represented in this appendix were guided by information and knowledge available at a specific point in time. Giving careful consideration to the evolving nature of this public health emergency, RLC leadership and staff used these extensive Task Force reports to discern the key themes and recommendations featured in the summary companion document, *Comprehensive Game Plan for a More Resilient Louisiana.*

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
Overall, how the sector has been impacted by COVID-19.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
The major factors that made the sector more vulnerable to disruption.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The principal strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
The critical strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future.

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment
The status of the sector, how quickly the sector should be able to recover, concerns/issues that are unique to this sector, and additional recourses or information to help accelerate the recovery of this sector.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
The explicit factors that made the sector most vulnerable.

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The detailed tactics and guidelines that can help the sector recover and strengthen.

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
The specific tactics and policies that can help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient in the future.

Task Force Sections

Click on the links below to go to your Task Force Section, where you can insert your Task Force's responses according to the guidelines above.

Construction

Economic & Community Development

Education & Workforce Development

Energy

Gaming

Healthcare & Human Services

Hospitality & Tourism

IT & Communications

Financial Services, Insurance & Real Estate

Food & Agriculture

Manufacturing

Restaurants & Entertainment

Retail & Small Business

Rural Development

Transportation & Infrastructure

Louisiana, we have a strong foundation.

What will we build?

APPENDIX

Construction

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
Like other industry sectors and general commercial activity, the construction industry has been impacted by COVID-19; however, the degree and extent of the impact varies widely based on the geographic location of the projects. Industry impact ranges from the shortage of construction material because of supply chain disruptions, job site closures, to labor shortages resulting from the significant increase in unemployment benefits. While the impact to date has been minimal, it is believed the impact will be felt in quarters three and four as the backlog of work contracted prior to COVID-19 has been completed.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
According to Dodge Data, approximately 30% of building materials imported to the United States come from China making it the single largest single supplier. China's COVID-19 experience caused a disruption in the supply of building materials to the US. Also, the construction industry is heavily reliant on construction craft laborers. These laborers populate the various construction trades. Currently, unemployment compensation is higher than unskilled craft labor compensation which makes it difficult to incentivize this labor pool to return to work.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Our Task Force identified the following short-term economic solutions to be effective strategies to help sustain the sector in the immediate aftermath of COVID-19 being declared a pandemic.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Liability	Local and State Government Officials	Executive Order and Legislative action	Protect industry related employers by defining and limiting their liability as a result of COVID-19.
2.	Regulations	Local and State Government Officials	Limitation on regulations	Limit COVID-19 related regulations and protocols to those necessary.
3.	Guidelines	Business, Local and State Government Officials	Compliance	Strictly adhere to CDC and OSHA guidelines.
4.	Tax Credits	Local and State Government Officials	Policy/legislation	Take immediate steps to extend and/or renew industry related historic tax credits.
5.	Inspections	Local and State Government Officials	Tools/Processes	Allow for a streamlined approach to inspections and permitting that is industry led.
6.	Unemployment Compensation	State Government Officials	Policy/Legislation	Unemployment compensation is currently higher than unskilled craft labor. Take immediate steps to enforce the refusal of suitable work.
7.	State Initiated Stimulus	Local and State Government Officials	Policy/Legislation	Develop an infrastructure package to be funded via a gas tax or equivalent revenue stream.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events.
Below are long-term goals and strategies that will help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future. There will be some overlap between the short-term and long-term goals.

The Task Force's long-term priorities are as follows:

1. Securing the enactment of legislation, both state and federal, that protect and insulate employers from fraudulent and unreasonable exposure to liability related to COVID-19.
2. Making Louisiana the training capital of the nation for advanced manufacturing and skilled craft professionals.
3. Making Louisiana the healthiest state in the built environment.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Employer's Liability & Risk Management	Legislature, Dept. of Labor, LWC, Dept. of Health, Insurance Community, OSHA	Governance, Policy Legislation & Regulation	COVID-19, like other infectious diseases (Influenzas, TB, etc.), is impossible to "track". As such, employers cannot and should not bear the liability or risk associated with the spread of infectious disease(s). The following action items are recommended: **Actions:** 1. Infectious diseases should never be classified as a workers' compensation claim. 2. Infectious diseases should never be classified as a "recordable incident" by OSHA. 3. Employers should be offered some guidance for preventing HIPAA violations and protection in an effort to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. 4. Employers should not be liable for the availability or cost of testing.
2.	Private Sector Initiative Number 1	Developers / Building Owners / Legislature	Resilient Development / Financing	USE Current PACE Financing Program Administered by the State to retrofit buildings

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				The State of Louisiana has a PACE financing program. The PACE Program is for critical building improvements that make properties more valuable by reducing operating expenses, improving the health of occupants, and strengthening long-term sustainability. PACE financing provides a way for local governments and private lenders to cooperate on loans secured by the property tax obligation, like a local improvement district. The debt does not appear as an obligation on the building owner's balance sheet, and the repayment obligation stays with the property rather than the owner whenever the building is sold. Since the Governor recently appointed a Chief Resilience Officer, that entity could oversee this important initiative. The state would implement a procedure for confirming that this approach during the design process by: 1. Adding to the criteria for selection of designers a category on building performance & resilience. 2. Defining what vertical construction applies to these goals (by building type, construction budget, scope of work etc.). 3. Requiring and paying for building energy and daylight modeling as part of the design process. 4. Requiring that the calculations show that the new or renovated building will meet the goals. 5. Requiring third party building commissioning as part of the budget for operations. 6. Requiring that building managers understand that the goals exist and operations are part of the measurement.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				The targets set out herein are goals that are reachable and will place Louisiana as an example nationally. It will: 1. Create jobs in the construction sector 2. Enable state government to be accountable for energy consumption 3. Save the state money in the long term (cost of energy over the life cycle of a building in many cases far exceeds the initial cost of vertical construction). 4. Reduce fossil fuel consumption 5. Make Louisiana a leader in the field of building performance **Actions:** 1. Engage the Division of Administration in the process of setting up the process: a. The designer selection process b. Required metrics 2. Commission study and provide report on the cost impact for implementation & implement program
3.	Public Sector Initiative Number 2	Urban Planners Local Communities The Public in General	Focus Portions of FEMA / CDBG Funding for Master Planning for resilience in local communities	Resilience is defined as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness. This definition reaches from basic needs to being prepared for the unknown going forward. The elements include but are not limited to, basic health needs, the ability to respond to physical, emotional and for that matter spiritual issues within a community. All communities must be focused on a plan for the future. Resilience is a term that is used quite often in our world and covers practically all aspects of being prepared. They are also specific to each community depending on location, demographics, culture, and economic condition to name a few. Professional planners should be engaged in the process of facilitating a clear focus on the future of communities.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				Actions: 1. Develop an overall program that defines community resilience. Including basic planning principles and a process for defining unique attributes of a community that needs to be addressed. 2. Seek out and focus federal assistance funds to address community master plans.
4.	Public Sector Initiative Number 3	Legislature Congress	Increase Vertical & Horizontal Infrastructure Spending	Increase State and Federal funding for highway, bridge, drainage, sewer, water, ports, universities capital improvements. **Actions:** 1. Temporary increase in state and/or federal fuel tax to jump start transportation infrastructure spending. Increase could be for 2 years or whenever COVID-19 is declared over. 2. Lift self-imposed cap on General Obligation bond sales. Could limit this to 2 years or whenever COVID-19 crisis is over. Dedicate to maintaining, rebuilding university structures. 3. Utilize annual surplus to fund local drainage, sewer, water projects. Could require a local match. 4. Allow local sales tax on fuel, to go to state highway projects 5. Assess fee for hybrid vehicles for enhancement projects, bike trails, walking paths, etc.
5.	Public Sector Initiative Number 3	Legislators Architects Contractors	Deferred Maintenance in State Owned Buildings	

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
6.	Healthy Communities - overarching theme	Commission Governor	Prerequisites; overall focuses for Healthy Communities Recommendations	The pandemic's exposure to health disparities should be a true opportunity to rethink how we plan and build our communities, housing, parks, streets and public facilities in order to mitigate and transform communities and residents' health outcomes. 1. Ensure that the program contemplates long-term operational implications and feasibility.
7.	Healthy Communities - Initiative #1	LED	Tax Incentives	Incentivize incorporation of healthy building elements into local built environments: Incentivize local governments to increase or pass Incentivize incorporation of healthy building elements into local built environments: Incentivize local governments to increase or pass legislation that supports healthy places policies including: Safe Routes to Schools; Smart Growth; Complete Streets, or to use tax incentives to promote health-focused elements in private projects/properties. CARES Act funding can be used to hire specialists to design the program. Initiative includes considerable opportunity to equity in access to healthy places. 1. Establish a menu of recommendations for health-focused elements to include in metropolitan built environments. 2. Identify existing incentive programs, possibly the Restoration Tax Abatement, to use as a model for incentive structure. See also financial incentives developed by The Finance Authority of New Orleans. 3. Partner with localities to solicit community input on program goals and designs 4. Partner with local jurisdictions to formalize program design and roll out.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
8.	Healthy Communities - Initiative #2	Facility Planning & Control; Dept of Health	Regulation	Community Benefit Agreements: For State and State funded projects, require community engagement and agreements focused on ensuring community well-being is preserved or enhanced through the project. CARES Act funds can be leveraged to cover Community Meetings and potential for community well-being project concessions. Initiative includes considerable opportunity to equity in access to healthy places. **Actions:** 1. Research existing Community Benefit Agreement structures 2. Define Community 3. Define possible project elements that promote community well-being. Possible sources as list in Initiative #1. 4. Engage habitual Capital Outlay recipients in discussion of regulation design. 5. Identify project(s) for pilot
9.	Healthy Communities - Initiative #3	Facility Planning & Control; Dept of Health	State Commitment	Healthy Places commitment for public buildings and spaces: Establish a norm for State-owned properties to incorporate Healthy Places elements that promote health and well-being by creating spaces that entice walking and other healthy behaviors. Initiative includes considerable opportunity to equity in access to healthy places. **Actions:** 1. Define Healthy Places elements. Possible Sources as listed in Initiative #1. 2. Identify existing State proper-ties with most egregious examples of unhealthy places 3. Triage properties for those with greatest potential impact 4. Establish plan and execute

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
10.	Healthy Communities - Initiative #4	LED	Tax Incentives	Establishment of a Healthy Places tax set-aside: Establish a tax credit akin to the School Readiness Tax Credit to allow citizens to direct their tax dollars to non-profits that operate in the Healthy Places Space Details **Actions:** 1. Define criteria for eligible non-profits 2. Design tax credit with School Readiness Tax Credit as model
11.	Healthy Communities - Initiative #5	Legislature, Dept of Health	Program Design	Be holistic in approach - avoid silos: Ensure when designing incentives and other programs that they are holistic in nature - that awareness is maintained of the various concerns that can be addressed. For example, when creating a flood plain to handle water management, consider how it can also contribute to citizens' health and wellness - can it incorporate a recreation area for non-flooded times? Ensure that Louisiana is getting our fair share of federal improvement dollars. **Actions:** 1. Identify concerns that could overlap with health initiatives: water management, arts and culture, transportation 2. Identify pending legislature that could be amended to include public health considerations 3. Identify federal grants that can be leveraged to also address well-being through healthy places. Ex: NEA grants, National Academy of Sciences.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
12.	Healthy Communities - Initiative #6	LED	Tax Incentives	Encourage innovation for existing spaces: Businesses are now arbiters of public health in a way many have never imagined. They will need help from professionals to rethink their spaces, and will need to make investments to up-date the same. Those costs are not contemplated in the relief pack-ages as currently designed. The State can incentivize innovation in this field to bring down the costs of future such investments. **Actions:** 1. Consider possible use of CARES Act funding to lessen strain on businesses needed to update to create healthier spaces. 2. Seek opportunity to combine improving health elements of affordable housing with incentives to keep existing housing affordable. Currently most incentives focus on new developments.
13.	Construction Contract Provisions for Infectious Diseases	AIA, EJCDC, AGC, ABC, FP&C, Owners (Public & Private), Architects & Engineers	Governance Contracting	COVID-19 has introduced new hazards in the construction workplace, requiring specific and extraordinary prevention efforts. Construction contracts often contain strict language with regard to cost and schedule, which can counter contractors' efforts to keep workers, owners and the general public safe from the spread of COVID-19, and other infectious diseases. The following action items are recommended:

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				Actions: 1. Modify construction contract provisions to promote prevention of the spread of infectious diseases, namely with regard to fair and reasonable adjustments to time and/or cost, when warranted and substantiated. 2. Modify construction contract provisions to incorporate fair and reasonable adjustments to time and/or cost associated with an "outbreak" or positive infectious disease test occurrence on a job site (stop time, disinfecting & cleaning, etc.). 3. Promote "safe distancing" with flexible work schedules and determining overall contract time and/or construction sequencing. 4. Promote "safe distancing" when scheduling and/or organizing: Prebid meetings, bid openings, project progress meetings, etc.
14.	Safety Provisions & Regulation	OSHA	Policy Legislation & Regulation	Through existing OSHA Safety policy and regulation standards, contractors are well-equipped and have rapidly adapted to self-regulation with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. In lieu of more regulation and "red tape", the following action items are recommended: **Actions:** 1. Allow the contracting community to partner with OSHA and continue to develop / enhance infectious disease prevention guidelines for the construction workplace. 2. Allow the contracting community to develop site specific safety plans on a "per project" basis, as opposed to "boilerplate" legislation that is ineffective and onerous. Implementation should be "flexible" and appropriate to the project circumstances and current risk level.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				3. Infectious diseases should never be classified as a "recordable incident" by OSHA. 4. Infectious disease prevention measures should be considered in existing OSHA "standard(s)" (e.g. face masks worn with other PPE equipment could cause a breathing restriction or overheating scenario)
15.	Craft Training Center	Governor & Legislature	Louisiana to become Center for Craft Training	Transform Louisiana into the research triangle of Advanced Manufacturing Training. Empower the Board of Regents and System Management Boards to marshal the transformation of Louisiana into the leading craft training and advanced manufacturing training center in the nation All current assets that impact this type of training and education need to be identified. We should include all provided by state, federal and private funding. Training dollars should follow the students and seamless articulation should be the goal.

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment
Questions to consider:
- What is the status of the sector (e.g., unemployment, status of business operations)? Answer: As outlined above, the sector remains fairly stable; however, concerns linger regarding the maintenance of this stability in quarters 2 and 3 of 2020.
- How quickly will the sector recover in the future (if no new strategies are implemented)? Answer: Again, the sector's primary concern is maintaining stability and we believe this can be achieved by implementing the short- and long-term goals and strategies identified herein.
- Are the impacts to the sector different across the state? Answer: Yes.
- Are there concerns/issues that are unique to this sector? Answer: Yes. They have been identified hereinabove.
- Are there additional resources or information needed to help accelerate sector recovery? Answer: Each sector can benefit from additional resources and information as it becomes available.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
Questions to consider:
- What underlying, systemic concerns made members of the sector particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19? Answer: Supply chain and labor challenges.
- In what ways were members of the sector best able to successfully adapt or pivot their operations in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19? Answer: Continued works in areas not impacted by supply chain issues, and worked aggressively to identify available unskilled craft laborers.
- What are opportunities to improve sector capabilities beyond the COVID-19 pandemic? Answer: The economic opportunities to improve the sector have been identified hereinabove.
- Are there shortcomings or threats unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic that could destabilize or hinder growth in the sector? Answer: We cannot imagine a sector being immune to these types of challenges. Like other sectors, we will have to pivot and place our industry in a position to take advantage of disruptive technologies.

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient in the future

Economic & Community Development

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
With a reliance on both tourism and energy, Louisiana has been impacted by COVID-19 as much as any state in the union. In April, Louisiana's unemployment rate reached 14.5%, and Orleans Parish saw an unemployment rate of 22%. In Greater New Orleans alone, nearly a quarter of jobs are at risk as a result of a post-COVID-19 recession. On the other hand, Louisiana is also uniquely positioned to take advantage of the changes being wrought and accelerated by coronavirus; with the right investments today, Louisiana can not only make it through the crisis, but come out the other side even better positioned for a more inclusive and resilient economic future.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
The primary factors that made the sector more vulnerable to disruption. The primary factors that make Economic and Community Development in Louisiana particularly vulnerable to disruption include:
- Historical lack of economic diversification
- Importance of hospitality and tourism as a sector
- Simultaneous impacts of energy sector oil price crash, due to oversupply and Russia/OPEC price war
- Health vulnerabilities of the Louisiana population, including heightened rates of diabetes and hypertension

The industries that will be impacted the greatest by a post-COVID-19 recession include: oil and gas, transportation, employment services (temporary help), travel arrangements, and leisure and hospitality – account for 21% of all jobs in the region (Sources: Moody's, Emsi).

Workers who work in an at-risk industry, are less likely to have health insurance or a college degree, and are more likely to be African American, receive safety net support, and be below the poverty level:

	Workers at Immediate Risk	Other Workers
Median annual wages	$20,768	$40,452
Has Health Insurance	85%	90%
High-School Diploma or Less	43%	30%
Black, non-Hispanic	36%	29%
Below 200% FPL	35%	20%
Receives Safety New Support	30%	18%

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19

The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Most important strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Health & Safety First	Employers; medical providers; state government	Policy	Protecting lives, especially the most vulnerable, must always be the first priority • Adequate hospital capacity • Protection of those at high-risk • Testing and tracing capacity • Healthcare system coordinated with first responders, via specialized communication platforms • Planning for a potential next wave
2.	General Protocols	Employers	Policy	All employers, regardless of their industry, should to should adhere to all federal, state, and local standards required for their industry • Physical distancing • PPE, including masks • Enhanced cleaning • Sanitation guards and other physical modifications • Temperature checks and verbal surveys • Signage and other reminders of protocols
3.	General Employee Policies	Employers	Policy	Put in place a defined protocol for dealing with suspected and confirmed cases, and communicate this policy to all employees • Work with public health agencies to encourage employee participation in mitigation measures such as testing and contact tracing • Develop and implement policies and procedures should an employee test positive for COVID-19 to ensure the health and wellbeing of other employees and customers

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
4.	Sick-Leave Policy	Employers	Policy	Implement stringent but supportive sick-leave policies • Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home; a sick-pay policy should be in play • Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments • Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions
5.	Sector-Specific Protocols	Employers; industry associations	Policy	Individual business sectors should implement safety protocols specific to their structure and needs, and there should be a protocol for businesses to be able to self-identify as essential. For example: • Retail – Limited number of patrons in stores • Restaurants – Emphasis on outdoor dining, where possible • Manufacturing – Temperature and survey checks of employees at gate • Office & Tech – Increased spacing of employees; continued work-at-home for vulnerable • Healthcare – Increased use of telemedicine • Maritime & Trade – Reduced shift changes, to manage interaction • Construction – Improved on-site sanitation • Cultural Attractions – Visitor capacity restrictions; outdoor attractions first • Casinos – Enhanced sanitation and cleaning • Universities – COVID-19 testing of all students when they arrive • Government – Increased use of technology to reduce in-person needs

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
6.	Access To PPE	Employers; state government	Policy, Program	Ensure adequate supply and efficient distribution of the materials If needed, this could be done via a centralized state procurement effort
7.	Education and Childcare	Childcare & educational facilities; state government	Policy, Program	Schools, day care, camps, and child educational facilities should begin to carefully reopen to 1) facilitate education; and 2) allow for parents to be able to return to work as the economy reopens • For children who are immuno-compromised, or live with those who are at-risk, at-home learning opportunities should be provided • Potentially, some of LA's $1.8B CARES Act funding be used for childcare subsidies for front-line workers and testing/PPE for child-care workers
8.	Legal Liability	Employers; state and local government	Legislation	Entities that operate in good faith should be protected from liability claims related to COVID-19, unless damages or injury were caused by gross negligence or willful misconduct; companies that have pivoted to produce PPE should not be held liable absent intentional infliction of harm • Legislation: HB826, SB491, SB508 of 2020 Regular Session (passed)
9.	Financial Support	State government	Policy, Legislation, Funding	Loans similar to the structure and purpose of the Paycheck Protection Program • For example, the LA Loan Portfolio Guaranty Program ("LPGP")
10.	LA: Open for Business	State government	Program	Stereotypes and misconceptions must be dispelled, and LA industries, especially tourism, must be supported • Marketing funds (potentially CDBG) should be allocated to let the country and world know that LA is safely back open for business

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
11.	"Keep the Dollars at Home"		Policy, Program	Retain recovery funds as wealth in LA • LA companies and workers, especially DBEs, should be prioritized for projects • "Procurement partnerships" can be established to help facilitate local relationships • Include LA Preference listed as included in this statute LA Revised Statutes, §38:2251 and §39:1604 • Allow sole source contracting for LA based innovation companies that are awarded SBIR/STTR research grants, similar to the federal agency procurement rules
12.	State Infrastructure	State government	Funding, Legislation	There will be less money available next year for capital outlay needs • Suspend or lift the state's self-imposed bond cap for construction borrowing • With interest rates at record lows, the state should use this moment to whittle down the backlog of construction projects
13.	Community Infrastructure	Local government; employers; residents	Policy, Funding	To get LA people back to work, we must ensure that our residents, in particular those with low-income, have access to housing options, transit, health and social services, educational and training opportunities, parks and recreation, and fully operating utilities • Local governments should work with businesses, stakeholders, and residents to plan for the adaptation of community infrastructure needs • Local governments and businesses should form partnerships that would provide additional philanthropy resources dedicated to educational and training opportunities that will lead to high-wage/high-growth industry employment opportunities

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
	Community Infrastructure	Local government; employers; residents	Policy, Funding	To get LA people back to work, we must ensure that our residents, in particular those with low-income, have access to housing options, transit, health and social services, educational and training opportunities, parks and recreation, and fully operating utilities • Local governments should work with businesses, stakeholders, and residents to plan for the adaptation of community infrastructure needs • Local governments and businesses should form partnerships that would provide additional philanthropy resources dedicated to educational and training opportunities that will lead to high-wage/high-growth industry employment opportunities
14.	DBE and Small Business Support	Employers; state and local government	Program, Funding	Implement practical strategies to assist DBEs • Offer financial support, connection to customer networks, and mentoring from seasoned business leaders • Launch a statewide campaign to encourage and incentivize consumers support small businesses • DOTD DBE program should be used in projects funded from Cares Act and all state funded projects • Support can also include a revolving fund that provides working cap-ital at a dedicated interest rate for DBE's /SEB's/Hudson Businesses that are awarded opportunities from the state or state funded projects • Consider carving out a sub-pool within the Angel Investor program reserved for minority/woman/ veteran owned businesses [ex. 3.6M regular pool and 1.4M carve out pool, returning the Angel cap to 5M pre-2015 level]

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
15.	Support for Workers	State government; local government	Program, Legislation, Funding	Using the United Way ALICE Report as a guidepost, we know that housing, transportation and childcare consume the majority of a survival budget for low-wage workers. • Create credits and/or subsidies to mitigate those costs would help remove barriers to re-entry to the workforce Consider TANF funding to provide short-term emergency financial grants to the poorest families
16.	Support for Healthcare	State government	Funding, Legislation	While the economy provides everything we need to live, the healthcare system saves lives and enhances our well-being • LA should make robust investments into public health infrastructure throughout the state, expanding our ability to offer physical and mental health services – and minimizing the economic burdens of healthcare
17.	Technology for Safety, Efficiency, and Prosperity	Employers; state and local government	Policy, Funding	• LA's organizations - public and private - to use available technology, innovation, and business process automation to deliver their services to citizens, and enhance their bottom line • Invest in broadband infrastructure throughout the State, especially rural areas • In broadband access throughout the State, especially urban areas
18.	Clear Communication	State and local government; healthcare providers	Policy	Clear communication to set expectations, and reduce uncertainty, is key • Develop mechanisms for defining in advance transparent and explicit triggers to reduce uncertainty

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
19.	Progress Tracking	State government	Policy	Make progress tracking publicly available • Under the auspices of the Resilient LA Commission, establish a data management, reporting, and dynamic modeling team to help track and monitor daily progress toward the transmission rate goal and other key public health system metrics (including mental health) as well as key economic and community recovery indicators • A statewide "Coronavirus Dashboard" may be a good communication platform for progress
20.	Reopening Guidelines	Industry associations; healthcare providers	Policy	Phases per CDC and State guidelines • Balance "lives and livelihoods" • Suggested guidelines and phasing by industry in Appendix

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Most important strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Early Childhood	State government	Policy, Legislation, Funding	More children from economically disadvantaged families should enter kindergarten ready to learn LA must find a way to increase investments in early education Expand access to high-quality early care and education programs for all at-risk children from birth through age four

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
2.	K-12	State government; K-12 education providers	Policy, Legislation, Funding	Protect education policies that are working, make changes when needed, and continue to align with workforce priorities • Maintain a strong school accountability system, rigorous K-12 academic standards and high-quality assessments and continue to build upon a wide and dynamic array of education choices for students and parents • Federal stimulus funding should be targeted to investments in technology for unserved areas and its adoption, especially for students and families that do not have knowledge of how to access computing devices or internet connectivity to continue their educational pursuits • Utilize the efforts of LA Perkins V: Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) and Jump Start to identify regional work-force priorities which can form the basis of future alignment conversations across the state • At all levels of K-12 education, a greater awareness of LA industries and the jobs that power them is critical to conversations about the opportunities for prosperity in the state • Align industry needs with K-12 education, Innovation, and financial literacy to foster more entrepreneurship within the state with a specific focus on under served communities of color that have been historically marginalized

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
3.	Higher Education/ Workforce	State Government; Higher Ed Institutions	Policy, Legislation, Funding	Produce the talent to fill the high-tech jobs of the future, improve the socio-economic status of LA citizens, and better align higher education and workforce training with priorities • Enhance access and affordability of post-secondary educational opportunities for all • Align university offerings with regional economic and workforce development priorities • Create medium-term training opportunities in high-demand fields, as a result of COVID-19 • Strengthen investments into statewide research universities that are essential for LA health and well-being, innovation and economic development • LSU Health Sciences Center Shreveport's Emerging Viral Threat (EVT) Lab helped LA become one of the top states for COVID-19 testing per capita • Upskill LA via lifelong learning with a focus on adult learners, by embracing LA Board of Regents Master Plan for Post-Secondary Education • Create flexible pathways throughout post-secondary education • Leverage LA's community and technical colleges
4.	Taxes	State government	Policy, Legislation	Building a stronger, more resilient LA economy requires a tax structure that is fair, adequate and sustainable - one that is competitive with other states, yet raises the revenue needed to make the investments necessary in education, workforce training, healthcare services and public safety • Physical distancing • Create a competitive tax environment with lower rates and more stability for individual and business income. Eliminate the franchise tax • Encourage capital expenditures

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				• Offer a modernized, uniform system of sales tax administration, collection and auditing (potential legislation is HB14 of 2020 Special Session • Local governments should have greater flexibility for their revenue base and put more emphasis on property taxes • Decouple LA's tax code from the federal tax code Advance legislative policies that broaden the base, lower the rates for Personal and Corporate Income Taxes, offset by eliminating federal deductibility; highlighted in the Task Force on Structural Changes in Budget and Tax Policy (HCR11)
5.	Fiscal Policy Reform	State Government	Policy, Legislation	• Review tax incentive programs, in coordination with LED, to seek ways to improve the ROI to the state and modernize such programs to attract participation while reflecting a new economy strategy post-COVID-19 • Maximize the use of federal dollars and encourage more aid such as the bipartisan State and Municipal Assistance for Recovery and Transition (SMART) Act Prioritize fairness and equity. While unemployment has hit every economic sector, the biggest job losses are in the fields of hospitality, food service, accommodation and retail - jobs that typically employ ALICE [Asset Limited, Income Constrained and Employed] workers

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
6.	Pension Reform	State Government	Policy, Legislation	Improve the state pension system to reduce the risk of increasing debt, better serve the state's workforce recruitment needs and provide a more competitive system for employees • Establish a better system for the long-term in which the expense to employ state workers and teachers is reduced by lowering unfunded liabilities and correcting the practices that help create those liabilities – move to hybrid contribution system • Implement reforms over the next four years with significant impacts felt in the 2030s and permanently beyond • Potential legislation includes HB31, HB32 and SB18 of 2020 Regular Session
7.	Constitution	State government	Policy, Legislation	Simplify the state constitution to increase fiscal flexibility, allow improvements to tax and spending policies and modernize state and local relations • Remove fiscal complexity and replace with provisions that focus on the fundamental operation of government rather than specifying details better left to statutes
8.	Transportation and Other Infrastructure	State government	Policy, Legislation, Funding	Invest in transportation infrastructure, including ports and waterways, enhance public safety, relieve congestion in major urban areas and support commerce and economic development • Highways and waterways should be prioritized for investment in order to improve efficiency and productivity for LA o Complete I-69 and I-49

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				• Expand approach to transportation investment to address the need for affordable, quality transit, micro-transit, and bike/ pedestrian options to serve those who rely on public transit for access to jobs and services as well as to provide the kinds of transportation choices that are increasingly critical to economic competitiveness and resilience during times of disaster. • Inter-city commuter rail should be considered for efficiency, safety and hurricane protection **Protect Coastal Infrastructure** • Capitalize on LA's expertise, position as a world leader, and investments in coastal restoration and water management, while simultaneously working to improve its ecosystems • Protect and leverage coastal funds • Maximize the beneficial use of floodplains and green infrastructure to reduce flood risk and improve resilience statewide; build on LA's commitment to nature-based solutions exemplified by the LA Watershed Initiative and Coastal Master Plan by increasing workforce training opportunities and committing to the restoration of natural habitats at all scales

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
9.	Technology & Innovation	State and local government	Policy, Legislation, Funding	Strengthen & invest in urban and rural broadband infrastructure for a "Connected LA" • Leverage existing broadband infrastructures, including state-owned assets such as the LA Optical Networking Initiative, DOTD fibers and dark fibers to maximize the penetration of broadband through a statewide Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTP) imperative • Continue efforts to work with electric cooperatives (including rural) to address the digital divide and foster economic opportunities; reinforced by SB4 Research and Development Tax Credit extension of the 2020 First Extraordinary Session; enhance Phase 0 grant preparation support for research companies pursuing SBIR/STTR federal agency grants; strengthen collaboration between LED, the LA Technology Transfer Office, and the SBIR Consortium • Enhance LA's cybersecurity resilience with investments in the Governor's LA Cybersecurity Commission programs • Leverage the work of the LA Cybersecurity Commission and the RLC to foster investments into research universities and colleges producing cybersecurity innovations, workforce and industry relevant cybersecurity certificates; leverage this ecosystem to recruit innovative cybersecurity related technology companies; reinforced by HB52 Digital Media Tax Credit expansion of the 2020 First Extraordinary Session • Increase collaboration with and support for LA's military installations

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				• Working with the Procurement and Technical Assistance Center, the LA Division of Administration, and the Defense Logistics Agency, promote procurement opportunities for LA's medium-to-small businesses that demonstrate cyber resilience, at the state and national levels • Intentionally enhance connectivity between research universities and innovative small businesses to attract federal funds through Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs available through all federal agencies • Align tax incentives to create greater synergies between companies and our post-secondary institutions, and pair federal investments in research and development with LED and private-sector investments in scientific and technical moonshots • Increase collaboration with and support for LA's military installations
10.	Business Prospects in the New Normal	Business Community, Entrepreneurs, State and Local Government	Policy, Legislation, Funding	To build a more resilient and inclusive economy and community, LA's post-COVID-19 business development efforts must support and grow foundational industries, while attracting and growing diversifying industries. We can be guided by large trends already in place and accelerating: • Onshoring of key manufacturing and service industries • Technology growth and reshoring (e.g., from India) • Healthcare Innovation • Water Management • Energy Industry Transformation • Small Business Support o AgriBio, Renewables/Recycling

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				• Support Minority-owned and DBE businesses, to ensure they have awareness of, and access to, these opportunities in the post-COVID-19 business environment • Build a minority capital investment fund for micro/small business so that they can pivot into the innovative economy • Tap into an existing network of federally licensed Small Business Investment Companies and Rural Business Investment Companies that are certified with the singular mission of growing our nation's small businesses • Use federal funding to establish small business grants or loan funds to small businesses for authorized uses utilizing CARES Act funding or other future, federal funding through public-private partnerships; reinforced by HB862 of the 2020 Regular Session, leveraging federal dollars to boost LEDC capital access programs • Create business stage specific set aside contracting opportunities for firms to compete with other liked stage businesses
11.	Health and Well-being, Social determinants of Health	Community	Policy, Legislation, Investment	Research shows that most health outcomes are shaped by factors other than health care, including community factors like poverty, educational attainment, access to clean air and water, the availability of safe and affordable housing, walkable communities with parks and recreational opportunities, and public transit. It also includes factors such as obesity, tobacco and drug use, and exercise

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				• Invest in healthy community design projects and policies that improve resident access to transit, active transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks and bike lanes, grocery stores and healthy foods, quality public spaces, safe affordable housing, parks, and clean air and water • Enhance investments into public health infrastructure and programs that have proven results, and work to ensure that healthcare delivery programs have the resources they need to respond to future health emergencies
12.	Community Reinvestment and Redevelopment	Community		LA's communities are more resilient now than ever in many aspects, but not every community is prosperous and not every community has access to the support it needs to remain resilient • Utilize Opportunity Zones, CDBG, Project Based Section 8, Tax-Exempt Bonds, and any other financial resources available to LA agencies to support the creation and retention of mixed-income housing and affordable housing for seniors and other vulnerable populations; reinforced by HB543 of the 2020 Regular Session • Support the conversion of existing infrastructure and historic structures into affordable housing by increasing the state commercial historic tax credit to 30% for properties that use Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits [HTC] and by removing Federal HTC and State HTC proceeds from the per-unit Total Development Cost limitation in the LA Qualified Allocation Plan for Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
			HB4 of the 2020 Special Session; reinforced by HB13 and HB16 of the 2020 First Extraordinary Session Prioritize blight remediation: • Utilize CDBG funding to establish a statewide program that incorporates best practices from the New Orleans' BlightSTAT program • Assess LA communities with land banking capabilities to provide services to acquire, abate, and return properties to active use • Prioritize a holistic approach to community development with incentives, while driving value innovation: o Extend and renew the LA Commercial Historic Tax Credit, which has been utilized to revitalize and rehabilitate main street communities in approximately half of LA's parish o Expand the Angel Investor tax credit to allow for a larger tax allocation for investments in businesses founded or owned by people of color; consider carving out a sub-pool within the Angel Investor program reserved for minority/woman/veteran owned businesses [ex. 3.6M regular pool and 1.4M carve out pool, returning the total Angel cap to 5M pre-2015 level] o Renew the LA New Markets Tax Credit, La. R.S. 47: 6016, et al, in order to leverage available capital that will be announced by the CDFI in the Summer of 2020 ($3.5B) and in 2021 ($5B) for the 2019 and 2020 NMTC allocations; Reinforced by SB13 of the 2020 First Extraordinary Session

Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
			o Support policies that encourage private investment in small businesses, which are critical to the vitality of our resilient communities o Create and subsidize the creation of an investment program to create more minority and local investors who are willing to invest in companies owned by people of color o Remove bonding requirements that have to be done prior to bidding or the purchase of insurance just for a bid o Plan for walkable communities by investing in areas surrounding transportation hubs throughout LA; support federal policies similar to the REHAB Act, which encourages greater private capital investments towards creation of walkable, affordable neighborhoods o Develop an aging in place strategy which will promote overall health, housing and ability to live independently for a longer period of time

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Looking to the Future

Vision
Louisiana's resolve and determination in responding to and recovering from the devastating public health and economic challenges of COVID-19 will help convert this unprecedented and historic challenge into a time of new and expanded opportunity for future generations of Louisianans. That is our vision for a Resilient Louisiana - a Louisiana that:

- Enhances the ability of its people, its businesses, its governmental institutions, and its communities to recover and emerge stronger than ever;
- Creates economic prosperity for all Louisianans addressing disparities that hold Louisiana back and contribute to deep economic inequities;
- Embraces growth while ensuring sustainability; and
- Fosters innovation and modernization to stake its rightful place in the nation and global society, while preserving its rich cultures and natural assets.

Guiding Principles
The recommendations and strategies outlined in this plan are based on the following guiding principles. These guiding principles are used to measure recommendations and actions to ensure that the outcomes reflect these defining tenets.

1. Follow public health guidelines, determine public health capacity to dynamically assess risks, and measure transmission rates (R-effective) to transition from one phase to the next.
2. Maintain and improve the ability of all Louisiana residents to equitably have access to food, shelter, healthcare, education and job training, and other basic needs.
3. Provide support programs to increase protections for essential workers who live with increased risk to serve all Louisianians.
4. Establish a shared platform for a resilient economy across the state and across all sectors.
5. Pursue a data-driven and science-based approach - and a supporting strike team - to drive economic recovery decisions based on an understanding of needs, risks and benefits, and to ensure that risks are not disproportionately borne by the most vulnerable and the benefits are shared by all Louisianans.
6. Celebrate and build on Louisianians' shared culture of flexibility, adaptability, ingenuity, persistence, and innovation.

Introduction
The purpose of our economy is to support our people and ensure that residents are able to meet basic needs and maintain an acceptable quality of life. Thus, our goals for recovery should be focused on building a future that provides this quality of life for all. We must also recognize that, due to major, long-term shifts such as climate change and demographic changes, our needs in the future will be markedly different than those of the past. In order to be successful, strategies for rebuilding Louisiana's economy should be focused on our needs today and tomorrow and a shared vision for our future.

Summary of Recommendations
The following recommendations are based on the task force's research, expertise, and established best practices and input from other states and nations, industry associations, business leaders, local and national think-tanks and respected academic institutions.

Education and Workforce Development

K-12 Education

1. Address Digital Divide. Given the scope of the digital divide that this pandemic has exposed in Louisiana, we recommend that funding from federal stimulus be targeted to investments in technology, especially for students and families that do not have access to computing devices or Internet connectivity to continue their educational pursuits. Disrupting or discontinuing instruction for students in public school systems or public universities because of technology equity can no longer be an acceptable option.
    - This would include broadband connectivity and devices for both K-12 and higher education. It is now necessary that almost every class that had traditionally been unavailable online now have a distance learning component or options for minimal student/faculty contact.

Postsecondary Education & Workforce Development

2. Align Universities with Workforce Priorities. At a time when approximately 350,000 workers remain unemployed and many of them are considering upgrading their skills to move into a new industry, we recommend that Louisiana's post-secondary institutions redouble their efforts to produce graduates with short-term and high-value credentials, industry-valued certificates, undergraduate and graduate certificates, in addition to traditional undergraduate and graduate degrees.
    - It is imperative that federal stimulus dollars and other state resources such as Rapid Response funds be targeted into a highly-focused workforce development initiative such as retraining displaced oil and gas workers to address the immediate need for contact tracers. This training should be aligned to regional workforce needs and should also consider new-demand jobs, particularly in the healthcare field, that are a direct result of the corona crisis.
    - Further it is critical that Louisiana's post-secondary educational institutions align their curricular offerings.

3. Strengthen Research Universities. The COVID-19 crisis should remind us that our university-based research and innovation are strategic assets in critical times. While our universities contribute to the education and training of the vast majority of our in-state nurses, medical doctors, and pharmacists, they also contribute through cutting-edge research and innovation that impacts public health and well-being in the current context. Louisiana's research universities have been central to our ability as a state to grow our energy and petrochemical economy, lead our diversification, recruit IT companies, enhance our coastal and water management capabilities, and ensure our cybersecurity. As such, we recommend that the State ensure the viability and productivity of our research universities as decisions about budgets and budget cuts are made.
    - Louisiana's universities have responded to COVID-19 with vaccine testing, production of PPE through 3-D printing, and using data science and analytics to model spread of the disease. While some of our research centers, like the Pennington Biomedical Research Center at LSU and the Louisiana Center for Health Innovation at UL Lafayette, are studying chronic diseases and socio-economic conditions that have proven to be the underlying causes of the high number of COVID-19 deaths in Louisiana, others such as the National Primate Center at Tulane and the New Iberia Research Center at UL Lafayette are working with non-human primates in the development of vaccines and therapeutics for COVID-19. As budget cuts are contemplated, these university assets, and the role they play in the health and safety of our citizens, should not be neglected.

4. Upskill Louisiana via Lifelong Learning. We recommend that the State fully embrace, and appropriately fund, the Louisiana Board of Regents' Master Plan for Postsecondary Education, which seeks to increase the education attainment levels of our citizens at all levels. The Plan specifically focuses on robust educational attainment for 50% of all working-age adults (ages 25-64). OneAcadiana has launched a similar initiative called "55 by 25" for the 9-parishes of the Acadiana region, as a public-private partnership, to increase attainment of high-value credentials, including certificates, 2-year and 4-year degrees, for 55% of adults by 2025. The COVID-19 crisis shows how critical it is to maintain that focus and use the federal stimulus dollars targeted for higher education to creatively build upon that effort. As such, we further recommend that the RLC support and fund these statewide and regional efforts to increase educational attainment of all Louisianans, including creating re-entry pathways and training opportunities for those within the criminal justice system. Further, we recommend that post-secondary institutions create flexible pathways for completion of the quick-turnaround workforce training they need to go back to work.
    - Studies show that those most impacted by the shutdown of the nation's economy are low-skilled workers employed in low-paying jobs. Not only are they among the first to join the jobless ranks, the fact that they often live on the financial edge has repercussions across the economy. 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.

Transportation and Other Infrastructure

Transit and Transportation Systems

5. Investment in transportation infrastructure. Transportation investments provide an opportunity to address a backlog of needs throughout the state, expand transportation options, create jobs, spur economic recovery and development and prepare our cities and towns for future growth, development and sustainability. Like much of the country, Louisiana has not invested adequate resources in infrastructure for three decades, resulting in a high percentage of state roads and bridges deficient and in need of major repairs. We recommend that the state expand its approach to transportation investment to address the need for affordable, quality transit, micro-transit, and bike/ pedestrian options to serve those who rely on public transit for access to jobs and services as well as to provide the kinds of transportation choices that are increasingly critical to economic competitiveness and resilience during times of disaster.
    - Ensure that we are investing limited transportation dollars in the infrastructure we need for the future, not the infrastructure we needed in the past. Plan for population shifts underway throughout the state due to land loss and other factors and new mobility options taking hold in urban areas and driving economic change such as driverless cars, drones, scooters, and ride-hailing services.
    - In addition to stimulus and recovery funding, Louisiana should plan for a long-term increase in transportation funding. Develop permanent funding streams from both public and private sources to support a "fix it first" approach to roads and bridges as well as expansion of transit, complete streets and passenger rail.
    - Prioritize provision of transit and microtransit services for essential employees needing safe, affordable access to jobs. Residents with access to efficient transit will be able to get back to work faster than those without transportation.
6. Position Louisiana as an energy state, not just an oil and gas state. We recommend that Louisiana continue to diversify Louisiana's energy sector so that we continue to be a state supplying energy to the nation, including conditions on royalties and severance that allows the state to benefit from creating energy at a level that is comparable to other energy-rich states. Globally, major oil and gas companies are investing in alternative energies.
    - In 2018, the US invested $6.8 billion in clean energy RD&D, more than any other country. A recent study from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management found significant potential for offshore renewable energy technologies in the Gulf of Mexico. Renewable energy development, particularly wind energy, is an opportunity to attract a share of this investment and is well suited to Louisiana's existing manufacturing industry and infrastructure. Construction

of wind farms, for example, supports a robust labor force and requires operation and maintenance workers providing long-term, well-paid jobs. Promote the adaptive reuse of existing infrastructure. Louisiana already has the challenge of a large quantity of abandoned oil and gas infrastructure. Offshore platforms have the potential to be repurposed for wind energy. The decommissioning of old oil and gas infrastructure and the adaptive reuse of oil platforms represents a significant opportunity for long-term, quality jobs.

- Invest in and incentivize renewable energy. Since 2010, the cost of building large wind farms has declined 40%, while solar costs have dropped more than 80%, making them competitive with fossil fuels. With much of the world actively shifting away from oil and gas, we need to ensure Louisiana does not become a stranded asset.
- Invest in and provide job training for energy efficiency in the built environment. There is a significant need to improve the state's energy efficiency by retrofitting existing buildings. This represents a significant opportunity for workforce training and well-paying jobs.

7. Capitalize on Louisiana's expertise and investments in coastal restoration and water management. The coastal management sector, which has demonstrated significant growth in the last decade, has the potential to become an even greater driving economic asset for the state and its residents. We recommend that Louisiana should capitalize on the opportunity to become a world leader in coastal adaptation and water management, while simultaneously working to improve its ecosystems.
    - Louisiana is a coastal laboratory with an opportunity to research, innovate, and develop approaches, techniques, and solutions applicable around the world. Through a combination of regulations, financial incentives, as well as technical assistance, outreach, research and education by leveraging universities, non-profit organizations and the private sector, continue to build Louisiana's expertise in coastal and stormwater management. Continued support will also increase the state's ability to assist other states and countries with similar issues and position itself as a leader in coastal restoration and protection as well as flood risk reduction.
    - As world markets shift, natural resource-based sectors of the economy will need to adapt. To assist with transitioning workers (for example, from support industries for oil and gas to manufacturing components for wind farms), the state and local governments should explore retraining programs that target impacted economies and their workers.
    - Protect and leverage coastal funds. There are more jobs in southeast Louisiana in water management and restoration than there are in oil and gas. This is a growing market and the state is actively developing global expertise.
    - Parlay the state's expertise and investments in coastal restoration into new funding sources through emerging markets. Louisiana can develop new revenue streams as carbon markets expand and others look to offset their carbon emissions. Blue carbon is the term for carbon stored and sequestered in coastal ecosystems. The restoration of coastal wetlands can be a method for emitters to offset their emissions while providing an important revenue stream for additional large-scale wetland restoration.

8. Maximize the beneficial use of floodplains and green infrastructure to reduce flood risk and improve resilience statewide. Throughout the state, the restoration of wetlands and the reconnection of floodplain habitats to rivers can mitigate flood risk and provide opportunities for job creation. Committing to increasing green space in urban areas through the deliberate implementation of green infrastructure not only helps manage storm water but improves quality of life. We recommend that Louisiana build upon its commitment to nature-based solutions exemplified by the Louisiana Watershed Initiative and Coastal Master Plan by increasing workforce training opportunities and committing to the restoration of natural habitats at all scales.
    - Alleviate Louisiana's flood conditions both along the coast and near rivers, bayous, and streams. Transportation and development infrastructure should incorporate green infrastructure to the maximum extent practicable to lessen their impacts on flood conditions. While there is a primary benefit of reducing flood risk, the secondary benefits of improved air and water quality, reduced urban heat island, and improved health outcomes, both mental and physical, ensures infrastructure investments also address some underlying drivers of vulnerability.
    - Invest in storm water management approaches that confer additional benefits beyond flood risk reduction. Increased green space in urban environments not only reduces storm water runoff but also positively correlated with better physical and mental health. Improving storm water management throughout the state using nature-based approaches complements the state's "Sportsman's Paradise" image and long-term maintenance costs are less than for comparable traditional approaches (grey infrastructure).
    - Naturalizing drainage channels and restoring floodplain habitat has been identified as an opportunity for workforce development by the Louisiana Watershed Initiative while enhancing the water economy throughout the state, building upon the strong water economy on the coast
    - There are a number of high impact flood control projects on the books throughout the state that lack funding. This is an opportunity for some high-impact storm water infrastructure projects to be funded that would appreciably bring down local flood levels in future storms. Currently funding allocations makes these projects out of reach.

Technology and Innovation

9. Strengthen Broadband Infrastructure for a "Connected Louisiana." We recommend that Louisiana make investments into broadband infrastructure pervasive throughout the state, in both urban and rural areas, as one if its highest priorities. Given the "future of work and the workplace" in a post-COVID-19 world, investing into broadband – the most vital "utility" of the new age economy – must become a high priority for a high-bandwidth and broadband Connected Louisiana to assert its competitiveness in such areas as digital education, tele-health, e-commerce, and e-governance.
    - Leverage existing broadband infrastructures, including state-owned assets such as the Louisiana Optical Networking Initiative, DOTD fibers and dark fibers to maximize the penetration of broadband through a statewide Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTP) imperative.
    - Through enabling legislation and innovative public-private partnerships, Louisiana should continue its efforts to work with electric cooperatives (including rural co-ops) to address the digital divide and foster economic opportunities for all Louisianans, given the growth of the gig-economy, telework, and the state's push for e-commerce opportunities for business and industry.

10. Enhance Louisiana's Cybersecurity Resilience. We recommend that Louisiana make investments into strategic initiatives and programs identified by the Governor's Louisiana Cybersecurity Commission to enhance cybersecurity skills, capabilities, and capacities of Louisiana's businesses, municipalities, governmental agencies, and citizens. We further recommend that the State should align economic incentives and procurement opportunities for Louisiana businesses that demonstrate their cybersecurity resilience.
    - Over the past two years, the Louisiana Cybersecurity Commission has led comprehensive efforts to develop Louisiana's Cybersecurity Strategic Plan, which, when funded and implemented, will significantly enhance opportunities in a broadband-enabled, and digitally "Connected Louisiana."
    - Leverage the work of the Louisiana Cybersecurity Commission and the Resilient Louisiana Commission to foster investments into research universities and colleges producing cybersecurity innovations, workforce and industry relevant cybersecurity certificates. Using these ecosystem partners, recruit innovative cybersecurity related technology companies.
    - Working with the Procurement and Technical Assistance Center, the Louisiana Division of Administration, and the Defense Logistics Agency, and prime contractors, promote and prioritize procurement opportunities for Louisiana's medium-to-small businesses that demonstrate cyber-resilience, at the state and national levels.

11. Enhance Louisiana's New Economy Capacity through the Louisiana Innovation Council. We recommend that the State reimagine the Louisiana Technology Council to launch the "Louisiana Innovation Council," to harness the full potential of research universities, innovative private sector companies and entrepreneurship support organizations to foster the innovation ecosystem across the state. For too long, Louisiana has languished at the very bottom of the national rankings of the States New Economy Index (SNEI) and other such national and global measures of innovation. Viewing the challenge of COVID-19 as an opportunity to build an innovative Louisiana that fully exploits the intellectual capital of its research universities, the enterprising nature of its entrepreneurial people, and the productivity of its business and industry.
    - Louisiana should harness sources of capital including federal grants, individual and institutional investors. In addition to angel and venture funding, Louisiana should intentionally enhance connectivity between its research universities and innovative small businesses to attract federal funds through Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs available through all federal agencies that could serve as a non-diluting source of capital for innovative small businesses to grow.
    - In addition, Louisiana should align tax incentives to create greater synergies between companies recruited to Louisiana and our post-secondary institutions, and pair federal investments in research and development with LED and private-sector investments in scientific and technical moonshots.

Business Prospects in the New Normal

In order to build a more resilient and equitable economy and community, Louisiana's post-COVID-19 business development efforts must support and grow foundational industries, while attracting and growing diversifying industries. In considering how to accomplish that, we can be guided by large trends already in place and accelerating:

- Digital transformation
- Healthcare innovation
- Water management
- Transformation of the energy industry
- On-shoring of key manufacturing and service industries to ensure sustainability of supply in food, medical, energy and other critical areas

Small Business Support

Small businesses are critical to the vitality of Louisiana communities. A recent report by Main Street America revealed that nearly 31% of small businesses in Louisiana that responded to the survey are at risk of closing permanently over the next two months as a result of closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 60% of small businesses that responded to the survey could close over the next five months. While federal relief measures may address the immediate survival of small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, full recovery of even our strongest small businesses will be sideswiped by this unprecedented event.

12. 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. During the Great Recession, tax credit programs that facilitated the flow of capital to small businesses located in underserved areas helped minimize the closing of our nation's backbone. 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. 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.
    - Use federal funding to establish small business grants or loan funds. Provide grants or loans to small businesses for authorized uses utilizing CARES Act funding or other future, federal funding through public-private partnerships.
    - 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.
    - Expand the Enterprise Zone Tax Credit for use by small businesses in the hospitality industry, including restaurants and hotels, and other hard-hit industries.

Fostering Strategic, Value-Added and Knowledge Economy Sectors

13. We recommend that Louisiana create and nurture an ecosystem (physical infrastructure, education, jobs training, fiscal incentives) to support existing and new strategic, value-added, and knowledge-economy sectors. We recommend that LED hire sector-specific leads to foster business recruitment and statewide economic development efforts in the following areas:
    - Create opportunities for domestic manufacturing: Companies should repatriate their supply chain, leading to opportunities for manufacturing and service jobs. Louisiana has logistical and workforce advantages for reshoring of manufacturing jobs, particularly in food, electronics, and medical areas. Direct business development efforts towards pharma and PPE operations that may be candidates for on-shoring to ensure a sustainable and secure supply of those products.
    - Create incentives for tech companies to bring home programming and service jobs. U.S. infrastructure has allowed our workers to work from home uninterrupted while this has not been true for many overseas markets. Fast-growing tech communities like Greater New Orleans, with its reputation for a diverse workforce, can build off of the ecosystem in place. Programs such as digital tax credits, jobs initiatives, partnerships between Louisiana educational institutions and employers can help advance this effort.
        - Support next generation digital media (including music industry) and the software development ecosystem in order to develop a broad array of companies. These can include software for healthcare, logistics, energy, food manufacturing and other industries. Louisiana is already strong in certain tech verticals, particularly video games, which have grown 65% during the COVID-19 crisis. Augmented reality is another area of growth, as is telemedicine. Protect the digital, angel investor and quality jobs incentives as part of maintaining and developing the ecosystem.
    - Enhance Defense Industrial Base: Leverage existing federal defense and military installations with the Marine Corps Support Facility, Avondale and Michoud Assembly Facility in the New Orleans region; Barksdale Air Force Base, National Guard, Cyber Range and the Cybersecurity ecosystem in North Louisiana; Camp Beauregard Army Base in Pineville and Fort Polk Army Base in Vernon Parish to recruit more federal jobs, as well as companies that can expand Louisiana's Defense Industry Base. Louisiana should continue to work with our Congressional Delegation members to recruit the presence of Coast Guard and Marine forces into the State, especially given the presence of nationally significant critical infrastructures within energy and petrochemical sectors.
    - Provide support for entrepreneurship: The "New Normal" will drive a wave of innovation from local start-ups. Support the development of start-ups beyond the initial business plan through continued education. Support efforts to provide capital for growth.

14. We recommend that Louisiana establish the "Louisiana Bio-Pharma Advantage Taskforce" to work with LED and submit a detailed plan within the next 180 days to the Governor's Office and the State Legislature, outlining a robust strategy and a roadmap to recruit pharmaceutical supply chains to Louisiana, as the nation looks at repatriating the U.S. Pharmaceutical Supply Chain. COVID-19 has exposed gaps in supply chains that are critical to national security, public safety, health, and wellness of all Americans. Over the last 30 years, Americans have passively watched, as the pharmaceutical industry outsourced manufacturing to countries which could provide cheaper labor, raw materials, operations, etc. The American public, while bothered by the loss of jobs, was lulled into compliance with the prospect of lower priced goods. COVID-19 exposed security risks that are embedded in the current pharmaceutical supply chain. More than 72% of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) - the actual drugs that are then formulated into tablets, capsules, injections, etc. are not produced in the United States. The health and security of the United States is quite literally in the hands of manufacturers in China, India, and other nations around the world. It is time to change that immediately.

    Louisiana offers significant strategic advantages to recruit companies involved in the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, biomedical devices, and medical supplies. These include university-based life sciences R&D assets; abundant availability of chemical feed-stocks and blue-collar manufacturing workforce, especially given the cyclical declines in oil and gas industry; availability of multi-modal transportation and logistics networks; access to markets

and capital; growing networks of healthcare and hospital systems throughout Louisiana; and access to a population with significant disease diversity creating opportunities for clinical innovations.

We recognize that Louisiana produces a large number of chemicals and chemical engineers. Further, as noted, we have significant university assets for preclinical research in the form of the New Iberia Research Center at UL Lafayette and the National Primate Center at Tulane as well as clinical trial/clinical research assets in the form of Pennington Biomedical Research Center, LSU Health Sciences Centers at Shreveport and New Orleans, UL System-wide Louisiana Center for Health Innovation, and Tulane Medical Center.
Based on these, this report should, at a minimum, consider the following issues:

- We recognize that chemical engineers make up a significant percentage of the workforce within a pharmaceutical company. Based on the number of chemical engineering graduates produced by Louisiana's universities, and their skills, what is our workforce supply potential?
- Based on academic/research assets that we have in Louisiana - for pre-clinical and clinical trials - what types of pharma manufacturing companies, API manufacturing companies should Louisiana target?
- Based on the most prominent (Top 25-50) chemical and agricultural feed stocks we produce in Louisiana, what are the types of pharma/bio-pharma manufacturing companies/drug types/API (active pharma ingredient) producers best suited for Louisiana?
- Based on the demographics of Louisiana, its disease profiles and patient populations, what types of pharma manufacturing companies/drug types/API (active pharma ingredient) producers should Louisiana target?
- Where are the largest manufacturers of excipients in the US? Where are they located?
- Who are the largest buyers and what are the largest markets for pharmaceuticals in the US? Where are they located?
- What are the enabling tax incentives and regulatory environments we can establish to facilitate the growth of this industry in Louisiana.

Health and Well-being

Social determinants of Health
Louisiana's decision to expand Medicaid eligibility to low-income adults in 2016 has dramatically increased access to healthcare services by people who previously lacked insurance. Expansion helps ensure that people who lose their jobs, and income, due to COVID-19 are still able to access medical care without incurring financial ruin. But research shows that most health outcomes are shaped by factors other than health care, which helps explain why Louisiana continually ranks at or near the bottom on national indicators. These social determinants of health include community factors like poverty, educational attainment, access to clean air and water, the availability of safe and affordable housing, walkable communities with parks and recreational opportunities, and public transit. It also includes factors such as obesity, tobacco and drug use, and exercise.

15. We recommend improving the social determinants of health:
    - Make prolonged investments in public health programs and community development that go beyond clinical boundaries and have proven results.
    - Invest in healthy community design projects and policies that improve resident access to transit, active transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks and bike lanes, grocery stores and healthy foods, quality public spaces, safe affordable housing, parks, and clean air and water. These investments will address a number of the social determinants of health, while providing additional community benefits such as catalyzing economic development, increasing property values, providing storm water management services, and reducing heat island effects.

16. Enhance Investments into Public Health Infrastructure. Public health is a long-term investment in the safety and improved health outcomes of the people of Louisiana. Investments in public health are a proven and cost-effective way to reduce the spread of infectious diseases, limit the harm caused by chronic diseases, develop and deploy life-saving immunizations, and promote community health through shared information and coordinated systems. A strong public health system helps ensure that the state is in the best possible position to respond when a new threat emerges. Louisiana's investment in the Office of Public Health is 37% lower than it was before the Great Recession, and the agency's staff has fallen by 34% since that time. We recommend that:
    - Louisiana should re-invest in public health programs that have proven results, and work to ensure that hospitals, nursing homes and other public and private programs have the resources they need to respond to the current pandemic and future health emergencies.
    - Public health investments also should focus on reducing the prevalence of chronic diseases that shorten lives and keep Louisiana residents from reaching their full potential, such as diabetes, hypertension and asthma, by targeting the populations where these conditions are most common.

17. Leverage Research University - Healthcare Institutional Collaborations to Improve Louisiana's Health Outcomes. We recommend the Governor's office, Louisiana Board of Regents, and the Louisiana Department of Health fund and foster innovative applied research and community engagement collaborations between Louisiana's research universities, major healthcare and hospitals systems, public and private payers, non-profit organizations and community healthcare organizations to improve Louisiana's health outcomes.

    For the past three decades, the United Health Foundation has published America's Health Rankings report, providing an analysis of national health on a state-by-state basis by evaluating historical and comprehensive set of health, environmental and socioeconomic data to determine national health benchmarks and state rankings. According to the 2019 report, Louisiana ranks

49th in the US in overall health outcomes. Specifically, in the context of COVID-19 and known co-morbidities, the state's national standings are as follows:

- 48th in Infectious Disease
- 44th in Cancer Outcomes
- 46th in Cardiovascular Diseases
- 47th in Diabetes
- 50th in Behaviors
- 50th in Community and Environmental Factors

More glaringly, the State of Louisiana has NEVER ranked better than 47th in the decades since 1990, the year UGF began publishing this report. It is NOW time to change this narrative.

Research Universities across Louisiana are committing to partner – to be agents of the much needed change - and a herald a new era of collaboration to resolve Louisiana's long standing public health issues, including addressing root cause factors such as health access, inequity, poverty, socio-economic conditions and behavioral factors – a holistic approach that is critically needed to improve health outcomes of Louisianans. This collaboration will entail:

- Developing new multi-disciplinary, multi-university collaborative academic programs and curricula to improve public health programs, and nursing care coordination certificates, among others.
- Developing new R&D partnerships between universities, healthcare systems, and community organizations to enable holistic, long-term, and longitudinal studies that help understand the impacts of clinical and non-clinical interventions that inform care delivery models and improve health outcomes.
- Promote opportunities for pre-clinical and clinical trials to foster innovations in Louisiana.
- Enhance opportunities for life sciences innovation and entrepreneurship through healthcare accelerators that provide access to subject matter experts / mentors, innovation talent pipeline, undiluted capital, and healthcare marketplace.

Reinvestment and Redevelopment

Louisiana's communities are more resilient now than ever in many aspects, but not every community is prosperous and not every community has access to the support it needs to remain resilient. Communities that were prosperous before COVID-19 may now face new or additional inequities, job loss and lack of affordable housing opportunities. In order for Louisiana communities to thrive, equity, inclusion and innovation must be available and accessible to all.

18. Affordable Housing. The proposed 2020-2024 State of Louisiana Consolidated Plan for Housing, submitted to HUD, provides that housing and homeless needs of the State are substantial and complex, partly due to diverse racial and ethnic composition (numerous areas across the state contain concentrated populations, including African American, Hispanic, Asian, and others), as well as multiple and varying housing and non-housing challenges following historic flooding in August 2016. The cost of affordable housing development in Louisiana is affected by its policies, including tax policies affecting land and other property, land use controls, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limits, and policies that affect the return on residential investment. Considering the acute issues facing the lack of affordable housing and existing housing throughout Louisiana and public policy barriers, the following policies are recommended to provide access to affordable housing for a future, resilient Louisiana:
    - 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.
    - Support the conversion of existing infrastructure and historic structures into affordable housing by increasing the amount of the Louisiana state commercial historic tax credit to 30% for properties that use Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and by removing Federal HTC and State HTC proceeds from the per-unit Total Development Cost limitation in the Louisiana Qualified Allocation Plan for Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

19. Blight Remediation. As noted in a 2015 paper by the Community and Economic Development Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, blight—or the proliferation of vacant, abandoned, or poorly maintained properties—is a critical community issue in many cities throughout the United States, especially Louisiana. Economic shifts following the Great Recession changed neighborhoods significantly, due in large part to abandoned and bank-owned properties, disproportionately located in poor and unstable neighborhoods. The impacts of COVID-19 and the corresponding economic downturn will undoubtedly leave a mark on communities throughout Louisiana far beyond the resulting shifts of the Great Recession. Blight is associated with social, economic, environmental, and public health effects on neighborhoods, often due to suburbanization, population decline (particularly in rural areas), job losses, foreclosures and other events that render existing structures vacant or unusable.
    - Utilize CDBG funding to establish a statewide program that incorporates best practices from the New Orleans' BlightSTAT program, a program led by the Office of Performance and Accountability that brought leaders together from the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA) and the departments of code enforcement, community development, information technology and innovation, and law to address blight following Hurricane Katrina. The initial thrust of the program was to eliminate 10,000 blighted properties by 2014 in a transparent and accessible manner.
    - Assess Louisiana communities with land banking capabilities to provide services to acquire, abate, and return properties to active use.

20. Community Development – A Holistic Approach. Communities go beyond housing – local small businesses, large employers, community centers, schools, healthcare facilities – are among the many factors and industries that comprise a community, its necessities and the necessary components of a strong, resilient community. Louisiana businesses are the economic engines of communities, providing jobs to support residents. In order to plan for a future, resilient Louisiana, we must support diverse industries, small business growth and new job opportunities.
    - Incentives that strive to accomplish those objectives should incorporate best practices and guiding principles that result in successful incentives while driving value innovation:
        - Utilize incentives with a delayed impact to state budgets, while investments and economic activity occur now;
        - Mandate transparency through annual or bi-annual reporting to the State;
        - Demand accountability through effective incentive processes;
        - Encourage investment of private capital but only within state boundaries, while still attracting outside investment or new dollars to the State;
        - Measure outcomes prior to renewal of program; and
        - Empower relevant agencies to preside over programs. With these best practices and principles in mind, Louisiana can consider and incorporate policies proven to effectively leverage federal capital through the use of the private sector to catalyze investment in Louisiana communities, particularly low-income and severely distressed communities.
    - Extend and renew the Louisiana Commercial Historic Tax Credit, which has been utilized to revitalize and rehabilitate main street communities in approximately half of Louisiana's parishes. The HTC has breathed new life into vacant, blighted or under-utilized properties throughout more than half of our parishes in Louisiana - schools, warehouses, factories, commercial buildings and more. Every dollar in historic tax credits generates $8.76 in economic activity, according to a study performed by Place Economics. Providing an incentive – and an increased incentive for structures located in opportunity zones, rural areas and for the purpose of affordable housing - for the private sector to invest in our state's existing infrastructure will ensure lasting impact for our Main Street communities.
    - Renew the Louisiana New Markets Tax Credit, La. R.S. 47: 6016, et al, in order to leverage available capital that will be announced by the CDFI in the Summer of 2020 ($3.5 billion) and in 2021 ($5 billion) for the 2019 and 2020 NMTC allocations. The NMTC is designed to drive investment in low-income communities and severely distressed areas deemed too risky by traditional investors. The Federal NMTC Program has resulted in $42 billion in direct federal investments, leveraging nearly $80 billion in total private capital investment and the creation of more than 1 million jobs nationwide. Every $1 of federal NMTC credits results in $8 of private investment and $2.20 in federal tax revenue. A study of the Louisiana NMTC Program revealed that for every $1 in tax credits issues, $2 in tax revenue was returned to the state, the bulk of the revenue in sales and personal income taxes. There are over 30 Louisiana companies and firms that participate in the federal NMTC Program – whether as investors, attorneys, developers, tax credit providers, CPAs – who could utilize their expertise in attracting private capital to our state's hospitality sector, operating companies, community centers, schools, agribusinesses, small businesses - all of which shall be located in low-income census tracts throughout Louisiana.
    - Support policies that encourage private investment in small businesses, which are critical to the vitality of our resilient communities. A recent report by Main Street America revealed that nearly 31% of small businesses in Louisiana that responded to a survey are at risk of closing permanently over the next two months as a result of the effects of closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 60% of small businesses that responded to the survey could close over the next five months. While federal relief measures may address the immediate survival of small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, full recovery of even our strongest small businesses will be sideswiped by this unprecedented event. 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. During the Great Recession, tax credit programs that facilitated the flow of capital to small businesses located in underserved areas helped minimize the closing of our nation's backbone. 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. CARES Act or future federal stimulus funding could 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.
    - Plan for walkable communities by investing in areas surrounding transportation hubs throughout Louisiana. Support federal policies similar to the REHAB Act, which encourages greater private capital investment in public infrastructure, affordable housing and economic development – a timely goal and mission of driving the investment market toward walkable, affordable neighborhoods. The REHAB Act utilizes an incentive for rehabilitation of non-historic buildings 50+ years old and within ½-mile of existing or planned public transportation facilities. Eligible projects include residential rental property, building expansion and rehabilitation and new construction on adjacent lots on the same block. Bonus incentives are available for expenditures related to public infrastructure and attainable housing projects (units that are rent-restricted and occupied by individuals whose average income does not exceed area gross median income.)
    - Develop an aging in place strategy which will promote overall health, housing and ability to live independently for a longer period of time. Louisiana ranks high in percentage of its citizens with chronic conditions, such as obesity, diabetes and heart conditions, many without the resources to address these problems or live healthy lives. Meanwhile

people are living longer. (Add something about cost to state, quality of life) Louisiana has some of the leading companies in the country focused on care of the elderly and infirmed (LHC in Lafayette, Amedysis in Baton Rouge) that can serve as a great resource in addressing this community problem. We recommend that Louisiana establish a task force to consider approaches to serve an aging population, that considers access to services, reimbursement for in-home care, among other topics.

Fiscal Policy and Reform

Building a stronger, more resilient Louisiana economy requires a tax structure that is fair, adequate and sustainable - one that is competitive with other states, yet raises the revenue needed to make the investments necessary in education, workforce training, healthcare services and public safety. That requires some difficult reforms in the way Louisiana raises and spends money, and in the state's relationship with the federal government.

21. Decouple Louisiana's tax code from the federal tax code. Louisiana is one of only three states (Alabama and Iowa are the others) that allows full deductibility of federal taxes on state returns. The HCR11 task force, in its final report to the Legislature, explained why this is bad policy: "This deduction ties the fortunes of Louisiana taxpayers and the state's revenue picture to the perturbations of the federal tax code and hinders the adoption of lower rates that would apply to all taxpayers." Similarly, Louisiana should decouple its tax code from the federal Opportunity Zone law that gives investors a break on capital gains taxes for making certain investments.

22. Review and consider eliminating tax credits that have a negative return on the state's investment. Independent studies have shown that Louisiana's Motion Picture Investor Tax Credit and the Quality Jobs Tax Credit provide a poor return on the state's investment. These tax credits are a form of government spending, and take up resources that could otherwise be used for other investments.

23. Maximize the use of federal dollars and encourage more aid. States are constrained in their ability to respond to economic downturns because of the requirement to maintain a balanced budget. When state economies contract, the demand for services rises and the revenue to pay for those services inevitably shrinks. The federal government has tried to mitigate this with stimulus bills, including the CARES Act. But these laws come with many restrictions on how resources can be used, and will not be enough to make up for the steep shortfalls that state and local governments will face in the months and years ahead. Louisiana should encourage federal legislation such as the bipartisan State and Municipal Assistance for Recovery and Transition (SMART) Act, which would provide emergency funding to every state and municipality and prioritize those with the greatest demonstrated need.
24. Prioritize fairness and equity. The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked the most economic damage on the populations that had the least to begin with. While unemployment has hit every economic sector, the biggest job losses are in the fields of hospitality, food service, accommodation and retail - jobs that typically pay below the ALICE threshold for a family of four. To the greatest extent possible, Louisiana's economic recovery efforts should prioritize the workers and families that have suffered the most negative effects from the pandemic - those on the front lines, those who have lost jobs and those who want to use this moment to train for new careers by acquiring new skills. Poverty has been a fact of life for too many Louisiana families for far too long. In 2018, Louisiana's poverty rate ($21,720 per year for a family of 3) of 18.6% was the nation's third highest. For black Louisianans, the poverty rate is 30%. More than 840,000 Louisianans lived below the poverty line before the pandemic. 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.

Education & Workforce Development

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Executive Summary
Louisiana and her people are confronted with an unprecedented crisis, affecting every member of our society, but with profoundly disproportionate impacts on our most vulnerable residents. This is not surprising; ongoing historical inequities place the greatest burdens on those least able to respond with resilience, those least prepared to find opportunity in the midst of chronic stresses, let alone acute shocks. For the members of the Education and Workforce Development Task Force of the Resilient Louisiana Commission, this calls for a structural redesign of our systems and institutions around one guiding principle:

Resilience is one Louisiana.

This means:
- All people are valued;
  Equity gaps are erased;
- Information is shared;
- Resources are leveraged;
- Outcomes are published and made widely available and accountability measures are embedded in every process; and
- 100% collaboration links all agencies and entities focused on human development.

The status quo won't do. We must reimagine our systems for a resilient and equitable Louisiana by ending fragmentation and leveraging all resources with our people and their families at the center of our collective work. Structural alignment and the elimination of silos, with specific emphases on equity, will build efficiencies through braided funding streams and integrated pathways to meaningful employment for all our people, regardless of race, gender, income, or place of origin.

We have one primary recommendation and four supporting priorities:
Overarching Recommendation: Transformative redesign of education and workforce systems with every approach centered on the person and the family.

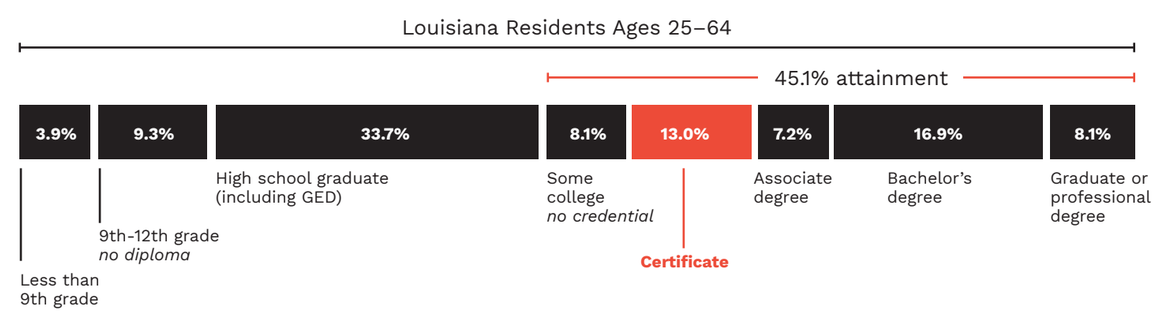
Supporting Priorities:
1. Combined state plans and processes brought into alignment
2. Crisis-informed snapshot of the state of the economy and opportunity in Louisiana
3. Proactive and braided resourcing
4. Collaborative regional processes

Collectively these items represent the structural redesign necessary to build a more resilient Louisiana, emphasizing alignment and collaboration at every level and laser-focused on the needs of the person and the family. Currently, there are multiple statewide strategic plans, many of them federally mandated, across agencies and entities focused on human development. Likewise, there are multiple councils, advisory groups, and task forces assigned to various and often overlapping portions of the education and workforce development landscape. Achieving alignment between the combined state plans required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, commonly called Perkins V, is especially important. In addition, the state Workforce Investment Council (WIC), which is business led and includes membership from all Cabinet-level agencies and other WIOA-mandated partners, should drive meaningful, and measurable outcomes. With full alignment of mission and vision among all stakeholders, we have the opportunity to take Louisiana to the forefront of person-centered resiliency. This is a call we must not fail to heed. Education is the way forward, but it must be purposeful, robust and lifelong to impart the skills and competencies necessary to ensure a clear pathway to meaningful employment. Equity is achieved through improvements in education and employment outcomes: higher educational attainment, higher degree completion rates, higher wages, and access to pathways leading to rewarding and meaningful work regardless of race, gender, income and place of origin. To start the process of change, we must understand where we are today. We provide the following data to illustrate the baseline and to provide a foundation for goal setting.

1B. Current Educational and Employment Landscape
As a result of COVID-19 and the concurrent downward trajectory of oil and gas, Louisiana unemployment is at an all-time high. Many industries and businesses are suffering.

Louisiana's educational attainment rate, measured by the 25- to 64-year-olds with a credential beyond high school, is 45.1%. We lag the national attainment rate of 48.4%. Across Louisiana, educational disparities are found in the attainment levels of residents with varying characteristics of family income, race and geographic location.

Louisiana Education Levels



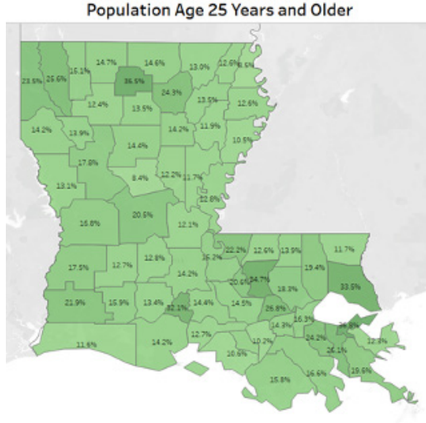
Louisiana Education Levels

Filtered by Race and Ethnicity

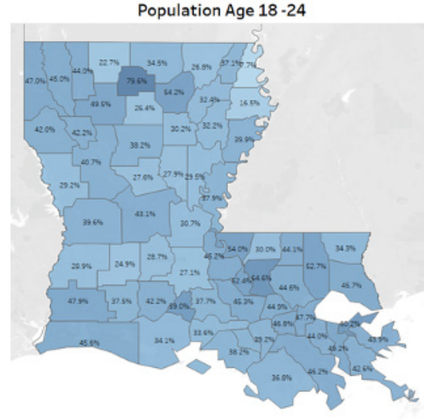
Source: Lumina Foundation: A Stronger Nation Report, 2020
Statewide, 23.7 percent of adults aged 25 years and older have a bachelor's degree or higher educational attainment level. Grant Parish has the lowest level, with 8.4 percent, and Orleans Parish has the highest level, with 36.8 percent.

Additionally, 49.3 percent of Louisiana's young adults aged 18 to 24 have completed some college coursework or achieved a higher education degree. The lowest level of young adults with some college coursework or a higher education degree is in East Carroll Parish, with 7.8 percent, and the highest level is in Lincoln Parish, with 80 percent.

Share With Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Parish: Population Age 25 Years and Older

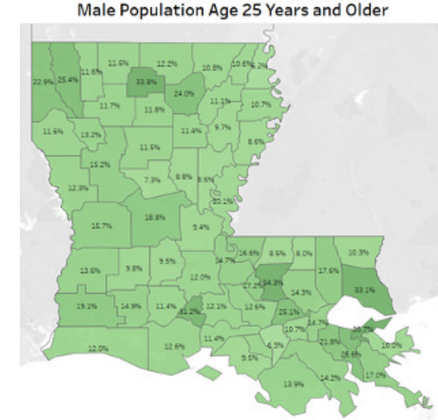


Share With Post-High School by Parish: Population Age 18 -24

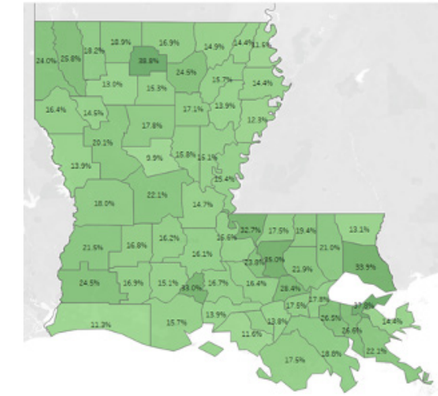


Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2018.
Women's educational attainment is slightly higher than that of men, 25.2 and 22.1 percent respectively. Men have the lowest level in East Carroll Parish, with 6.2 percent, and the highest level in Orleans Parish, with 35.7 percent. Women have the lowest level in Grant Parish, with 9.9 percent, and the highest level in Lincoln Parish, with 38.8 percent.

Share With Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Parish: Male Population Age 25 Years and Older

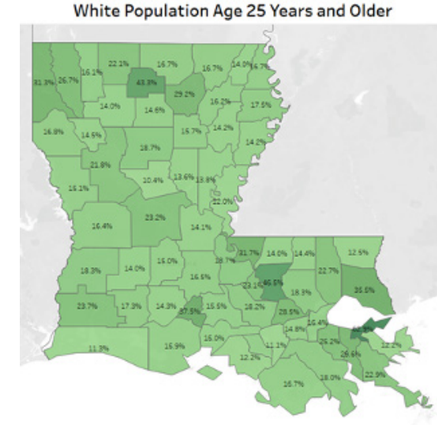


Share With Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Parish: Female Population Age 25 Years and Older

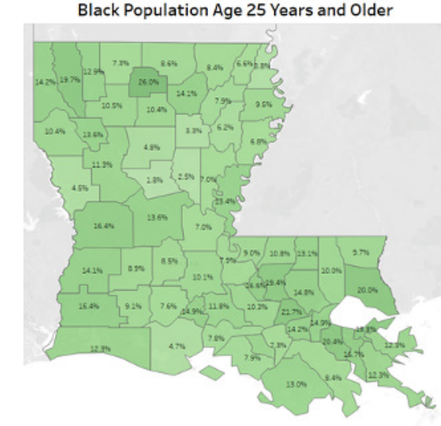


Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2018.
In Louisiana, 27.5 percent of White adults aged 25 years and older have a bachelor's degree or higher educational attainment level, compared to just 15.1 percent of Black/African American residents. For Black/African American residents, Grant Parish has the lowest level, with 1.8 percent, and Lincoln Parish has the highest level, with 26 percent. For White residents, Grant Parish has the lowest level, with 10.4 percent, and Orleans Parish has the highest level, with 62.9 percent.

Share With Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Parish: White Population Age 25 Years and Older



Share With Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Parish: Black Population Age 25 Years and Older



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2018.
Educational attainment shapes future earnings as well as the risk of being in poverty. For example, Louisiana residents with a bachelor's degree or higher are nearly seven times less likely to be in poverty than residents without a high school diploma and more than three times less likely than high school graduates.

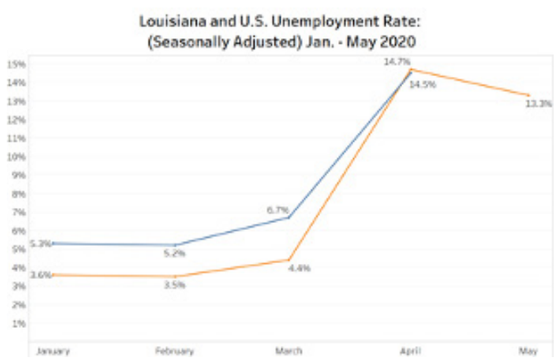
Poverty Rate by Educational Attainment Level in Louisiana: Population Age 25 Years and Older

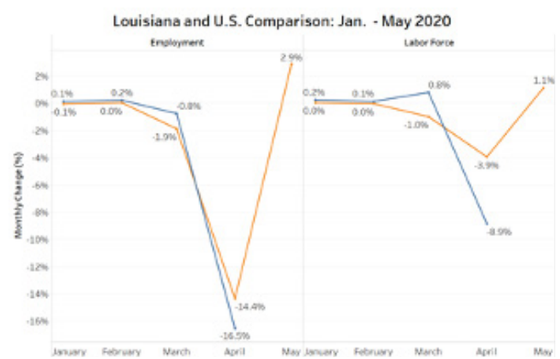
Indicator	Less than high school graduate	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college or Associate's degree	Bachelor degree or higher
Poverty Rate	33%	17.4%	12.6%	5%
Median Earnings	$21,618	$29,464	$33,721	$49,321*

**Median earnings for bachelor's degree holders. Median earnings for graduate and professional degree holders is $59,738.*
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2018.

A student's cost of college attendance has increased drastically over the past decade as tuition rates have increased to offset declines in state revenues to higher education institutions. Increased tuition rates across the state have led to a significant rise in college graduates with debt.

Louisiana's labor market has followed a similar trajectory to the national average between January and April of 2020. Data show that both Louisiana and the U.S. experienced record high levels of unemployment and the unemployment rate in April 2020; as well as record low levels of the labor force participation rate. Louisiana differs from the national average in the steep decline in its labor force in April 2020. The drastic decline in employment in Louisiana led to historic numbers of unemployed persons as well as to a large shift of working-age Louisianans leaving the labor force altogether. Therefore, the labor market recovery for Louisiana may need to address both employment growth and the encouragement of working-age adults to return to the labor force.





Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey and Local Area Employment Statistics.
Data on unemployment compensation claims show that beneficiaries are reflecting the broad disparities in Louisiana's labor market. The COVID-19 pandemic recession has led to greater rates of unemployment among workers that are women, Black/African American, and young (ages 16-34).

Additionally, Louisianans face the unique challenge of limited access to critical resources that promote work. There are clear constraints on access to employer provided health insurance, higher educational attainment, and quality child care. Data show that 67 percent of employed adults are insured through their employer; nine percent of employed adults did not complete high school education and another 32 percent lack educational experience beyond high school; and 42 percent are working parents with children in need of schooling or child care. Broader access to health insurance, postsecondary education, and child care promote employment, while also creating jobs.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The guidelines for the reopening of K-12 and higher education institutions comprise the recommendations of the EWD Task Force within COVID-19 to the Resilient Louisiana Commission. These guidelines are included in Section 2 of this report. All other recommendations of the Task Force, including those that apply during the crisis phase, are long-term priorities important to building a resilient Louisiana for the future, and are included in the following section.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Workforce Development and Reemployment

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Return citizens to employment	LWC/WIC, Education Providers, LED, REDOs	Tools/Processes, Funding	1. Leverage all available resources and en-gage all appropriate entities to accelerate workforce redevelopment. 2. Expand on-the-job training (OJT) allowing for wage subsidies for employers to hire workers and expanding the skill base of employees. 3. Convene industry partners to assess immediate employment needs, address those needs, and measure outcomes.
2.	Updated occupational forecast	LWC/OFC/WIC	Tools/Processes, Funding	1. The Occupational Forecasting Conference (OFC) of the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) will produce an updated forecast in response to the current crisis and provide further updates as needed, based on dynamics in the economy. The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and the WIC will provide progress reports and specific delivery dates.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
3.	Use of the HiRE system	LWC/WIC/State and Regional Workforce Stakeholders	Tools/Processes	1. State and regional workforce partners collaborate to ensure that job seekers and employers use the HiRE system to maximize centralized data collection and ensure that all jobs are post-ed on a single site. 2. Reformat the LWC homepage (www.laworks.net) to emphasize the HIRE site for job seekers and employers. 3. LWC, with assistance from other partners, will develop simple, streamlined electronic and video guides for job seekers and employers to use the HIRE system for job posting and job searching and share these guides with employer facing and job-seeker-facing partners to maximize impact by driving users to a single site. Where these resources already exist, they will be lever-aged.
4.	Collaborative regional processes	Agencies and Entities Focused on Human Development	Tools/Processes	1. All agencies and entities focused on human development, including Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), regional and local economic development organizations, education and training providers, corrections and juvenile justice, children and family services, and community organizations, will collaborate regionally to coordinate funding and services. This can be accomplished via LWDBs and the WIC. 2. Evaluate and leverage all public benefits data tools as appropriate. 3. Economic development organizations throughout the state, led by LED, are developing plans to diversify our economies for greater resilience and future growth opportunities. In response to these plans, education and workforce development partners will develop specific strategies to address the shifting skills requirements required to thrive in the new economy.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				1. All agencies and entities focused on human development, including Local Work-force Development Boards (LWDBs), regional and local economic development organizations, education and training providers, corrections and juvenile justice, children and family services, and community organizations, will collaborate regionally to coordinate funding and services. This can be accomplished via LWDBs and the WIC. 2. Evaluate and lever-age all public benefits data tools as appropriate. 3. Economic development organizations throughout the state, led by LED, are developing plans to diversify our economies for greater resilience and future growth opportunities. In response to these plans, education and workforce development partners will develop specific strategies to address the shifting skills requirements required to thrive in the new economy. 4. Collect, review, and publish model processes, including those produced by the EWD Task Force of the RLC, to direct regional efforts, including development of guide-lines for coordinated funding, employer out-reach, and a list of needed partners. 5. Coordinate regional business services teams including LWDBs, regional economic development organizations (REDOs) and other economic development entities, and community and technical colleges.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				6. Conduct partnership team-building exercises to dismantle silos, build cultural understanding across agencies and organizations, and create structural alignment around the common mission of providing every Louisianan with access to rewarding and meaningful employment. 7. LWBDs will meet jointly on a regular basis to discuss and review local and regional employment trends, partnership models, and collaborative funding. 8. Collect, review, and publish best practices for partnerships and funding. 9. Ensure all sources of federal, state, and special-use funds are mapped and fully utilized at the state and regional levels. 10. Convene quarterly meetings between LWC and the Louisiana Board of Regents (BoR) leadership to align policy and procedures
5.	Implement closed-loop service delivery through common case management	Agencies and Entities Focused on Human Development	Tools/Processes	Deliver holistic services to learners, job seekers, and public services recipients through closed-loop referral systems that allow case workers to interact and collaborate across agencies.
6.	Build short-term and longer-term pathways to meaningful employment using a per-son-centered approach	State and Regional Education and Workforce Development Stakeholders	Tools/Processes, Policy, Funding	1. Build new processes based on what the economy needs and what the people need, incorporating and braiding multiple funding streams, including WIOA funds and other resources like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education and Training Program (SNAP E&T). 2. Understand unemployed and underemployed populations through comprehensive and effective data analysis and assessment tools. Attention will be given to factors affecting equity of access, including

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				social determinants of health, mental health stressors, and the challenges faced by Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households. 3. Align job seekers to education and employment through skills matching to currently available job openings and/or future opportunities. 4. Measure results.
7.	Develop data infrastructure that allows for the collection and reporting of workforce and industry-based certifications (IBCs)	LDOE, LWDBs, BoR, Higher Education Management Boards, LWC/IBCC, LED	Tools/Processes	1. Convene a working group with member-ship from each of the related agencies and institutions to recommend policies and strategies for improving the data infra-structure and information available about the attainment of workforce and IBCs by the Louisiana citizenry. 2. Partner with appropriate vendors to develop a framework, architecture, data security, and scoping of the project. 3. Establish a single reporting process and protocol for submit-ting data regarding completion of work-force or IBCs. 4. Establish a venue by which the state collectively is able to surface reports on the attainment of work-force and IBCs that tell a more complete story of the attainment rates among our populace.

Resilient and Equitable Education and Learning in the New Normal

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Transformative redesign of higher education	BoR	Tools/Processes	1. Working with all relevant stakeholders and partners, BoR will lead the transformative redesign of higher education by reframing the Master Plan for Higher Education within the context of a resilient and equitable Louisiana economy. 2. The reframing of the new Master Plan will include a sharper focus on resilience and equity while accelerating and elevating the founding principles of the original plan. 3. The reframed Master Plan will engage partners in understanding the current landscape, identifying gaps and inequities, and developing plans and metrics for progress. Traditional barriers to the successful completion of education and training programs, like transportation, access to childcare, and affordability, disproportionately affect populations most in need of pathways to rewarding and meaningful work. These barriers must be specifically and intentionally addressed through a person-centered approach. 4. The HBCU Advisory Council and others will be engaged to consider specific challenges to resiliency encountered by HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions and their students.
2.	Erase the digital divide	BoR, Digital Inclusion Council, LDOE	Tools/Processes, Funding	*Note: This report includes a separate section on bridging the digital divide with broader recommendations.* 1. Understand and address access challenges specific to rural and urban populations, families, and campuses.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				2. Expand and enhance digital delivery of learning, including the development of best practices for student engagement as well as teacher and faculty development. 3. Target a one-to-one ratio of digital learning devices to students across the K-12 and postsecondary educational systems. 4. Identify resources and best practices to provide assistance for families in engaging with remote learning practices.
3.	Equitable access to education leading to resilient and meaningful employment	BoR, Legislature, Governor Edwards, Partners and Stakeholders	Policy, Funding	1. Explore innovative funding models for short-term credentials of value to employers. 2. Benchmark national and international models of higher education funding to maximize equity and alignment of skills to economic need. 3.Encourage the Louisiana Congressional delegation to consider federal funding options like second-chance Pell Grants and Pell Grants for short-term and non-credit programs.
4.	Weaving resilient skills throughout lifelong learning	BoR, LDOE, Education Providers, LWC, LWDBs, LaSTEM Council, Cybersecurity Commission, NICERC	Tools/Processes, Policy, Funding	1. Support and lever-age Regional STEM Centers to build early STEM literacy and lat-er acquisition of STEM skills important to resiliency, with a specific focus on underrepresented populations and underserved locations. 2. Partner with the Cybersecurity Com-mission, the Cyber-Innovation Center/NICERC, and other partners to advance early and ongoing skills development and education relevant to cybersecurity, including in areas important to resilience, like critical infrastructure. 3. Every K-12 school district should have a technology plan that addresses the needs of all their students. This should include appropriate training for all teachers in online and distance learning best practices.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				1. Support and lever-age Regional STEM Centers to build early STEM literacy and lat-er acquisition of STEM skills important to resiliency, with a specific focus on underrepresented populations and undeserved locations. 2. Partner with the Cybersecurity Com-mission, the Cyber-Innovation Cen-ter/NICERC, and other partners to advance early and ongoing skills development and education relevant to cybersecurity, including in areas important to resilience, like critical infrastructure. 3. Every K-12 school district should have a technology plan that addresses the needs of all their students. This should include appropriate training for all teachers in online and distance learning best practices. 4. Every K-12 school district should have a continuing learning plan that will allow them to pivot quickly in the event of future school closures or other disruptions. 5. Ensure that every K-12 student has access to high-quality career counseling, including the engagement of career counseling support partners like Career Compass where appropriate. Counseling services must provide students a thorough under-standing of all path-ways to employment, including traditional four-year college pathways, apprentice-ships and other work-based learning mod-els, short-term technical training, and community and technical college pro-grams. 6. Foster the development and expansion of innovative and proven work-based learning models, including immersion programs, registered apprenticeships, residency-like models, and expanded on-the-job training (OJT) through

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				direct funding and incentive programs, with comprehensive guidance and support offered to providers and employers to maximize outcomes. Ensure that, where possible, these programs are optimized for technology solutions and re-mote learning. 7. Conduct outreach to the high school graduating class of 2020 and ensure affordable, high-quality remediation as they enter college campuses. 8. Expand and enhance adult learning programs at all levels, accompanied by comprehensive coaching and mentoring services and holistic two-generation approach-es where needed. 9. Promote and expand upskilling, re-skilling, and transition programs. 10. Develop specific strategies to address challenges to progress due to federal and state constraints on data sharing. 11. Clarify and simplify access to childcare for individuals in education and training and allow coordination between the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and LWC/LWDB to deter-mine funding re-sources.
5.	In coordination with the WIC, accelerating and elevating the work of the Governor's Workforce and Education Sub-Cabinet around resilience and equity.	WIC/Workforce and Education Sub-Cabinet	Tools/Processes	1. The Workforce and Education Sub-Cabinet will coordinate with the WIC to eliminate duplication of effort and maximize engagement of stakeholders. 2. Evaluate the recommendations made to the Sub-Cabinet by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) to increase equity in education and workforce outcomes in Louisiana, and revise and refocus as needed to build resilience.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				3. Based on this evaluation, accelerate and enhance the work of the Sub-Cabinet Task Forces, especially to leverage public benefits to completion including customizing the Federal Reserve Bank Cliff tool to inform these efforts. 4. Leverage the power of the Sub-Cabinet to accelerate the work of the state's Master Plan for Higher Education and its talent development goal. 5. Specifically address the impact of the current crisis on dislocated youth.
6.	Annual joint meetings of boards engaged with education, workforce development, and economic development	WIC, BoR, Higher Education Boards, LAICU, BESE, Board of Commerce and Industry	Tools/Processes	Annually convene joint meetings of Directors, Chairs, and other members as appropriate of the WIC, BoR, Boards of Supervisors of the four public higher education systems, representatives from the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), representatives from the Louisiana Association of Private Colleges and Schools (LAPCS), the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), and the Board of Commerce and Industry, to align work and accelerate outcomes

Leveraging Economic Development for Resilient and Equitable Education and Workforce Development

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Resilience and equity in the new economy	REDOs, LED, LWDBs, WIC, Community Leaders	Tools/Processes	1. LED will engage LWC and LWDBs as early as possible in the planning and announcement of business expansions. LWC and LWDBs will be included in the notification process and should quickly estab-lish an introductory partnership alliance to meet emerging work-force needs. 2. REDOs lead regional efforts to under-stand shifts in economic dynamics and the impact on skills needed for the resilient jobs of the future. Attention will be given to factors affecting equity of access, including social determinants of health, mental health stress-ors, and the challenges faced by Asset Limited, Income Con-strained, Employed (ALICE) households. 3. All findings will be shared and communicated with partners and stakeholders. 4. Based on the collected skills data, REDOs will create and present to the WIC a comprehensive action plan to close skills gaps in the workforce in partnership with business and industry, education and training providers, and community leaders. 5. LED FastStart will engage partners and include them in marketing and outreach efforts for programs leading to high-wage, high-demand jobs in the new economy, focused on multiple access points and using technological offerings (websites, digital plat-forms/HiRE, digital marketing pieces) as well as non-digital and personal outreach-based training, marketing, communication and access tools.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				6. Equity planning will be woven into all processes, including specific rural and urban development strategies and overall economic development.
2.	Educational resources	LED FastStart, Education and Training Providers	Tools/Processes	1. LED FastStart will share existing and future technology-enabled educational resources with Louisiana educators. 2. LED FastStart will identify opportunities for new and expanded training partnerships with the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) to enhance and expand education and training programs which provide direct pathways to resilient, high-skill, high-wage, high-demand careers in economic driver industries. 3. Information and outcomes of these partnerships will be included in LED's annual performance re-port to the Louisiana Legislature.
3.	LED Higher Education-Economic Development Playbook	LED/LED FastStart, BoR, LWC, LWDBs, REDOs, HBCU Advisory Council, LAICU, Community Organizations	Tools/Processes	1. The Playbook is specifically intended to engage higher education in the process of resilient and equitable economic and community development, in coordination with community partners focused on human development. The Playbook, accompanied by consultative services from LED FastStart, helps institutions of higher learning connect meaningfully with industry partners and position themselves to participate in, drive forward, and benefit from economic development. 2. LED FastStart is working with HBCU Advisory Council members to implement the Playbook process throughout their networks. These efforts will now accelerate and pivot to focus explicitly on resilience and equity metrics and ensure that the full power and potential of HBCUs as transformative change agents are recognized and fulfilled.

Leveraging Economic Development for Resilient and Equitable Education and Workforce Development

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
4.	Higher education investments	LED FastStart, BoR, LAICU, Higher Education Institutions	Tools/Processes	1. LED, through LED FastStart, directs significant funding to higher education in conjunction with economic development projects and opportunities. 2. These investments will achieve even greater impact with an orientation toward resilience and equity.
5.	Engage small- to mid-size, minority-owned, veteran-owned, and rural businesses	LED, REDOs, LWDBs, LWC Veterans, LA Department of Veterans Affairs	Tools/Processes	1. Small- to midsize, minority-owned, veteran-owned, and rural businesses often face disproportionate risks to their resiliency in the face of chronic stresses as well as acute shocks. 2. These business constituencies typically rely more heavily on the responsiveness and quality of the workforce development ecosystem than larger or better-resourced competitors. Programs offered through the LWDBs like on-the-job training (OJT) and the Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) are especially important for them. 3. LED's Small Business Services Group (SBSG) provides a comprehensive set of services to these constituencies. 4. The SBSG supports the Small Business Development Centers in providing resources throughout the state. 5. LED and REDOs will work with state, regional, and local partners to expand awareness and utilization of SBSG and Small Business Development Center (SBDC) programs and engage with education and workforce development.

Resilient Foundations for Individuals, Families, and Households

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Resilient households	Workforce and Education Sub-Cabinet, Agencies and Entities Focused on Human Development	Tools/Processes, Policy, Funding	1. Define what every resilient household should have in terms of educational attainment, income, and other major resources and set a plan to en-sure access to these resources for all. 2. Map and document Louisiana's 1.6M households by indicators of resilience. 3. Develop and implement specific strategies and goals to improve the resiliency profile of Louisiana individuals and households. 4. Expand and enhance holistic two-generational (parent and child) approaches throughout human development.
2.	Help families transition to working/learning from home.	Education and Training Providers	Tools/Processes	1. Identify resources needed to assist families in helping their students succeed. 2. Provide learning tools and resources for families to foster remote learning and use of technology-enabled learning models. 3. Ensure access to appropriate technology resources and technical support.
3.	Ongoing early childhood education (ECE) funding	State Government, LWC, BoR	Funding	1. Long-term funding solutions from local, state and federal sources are absolutely necessary to improve the quality of child-care and address in-equities of access. 2. Ongoing funding for all types of childcare is needed to provide Louisiana's families with pathways to resilience. 3. Funding gaps for infant care identified by the Louisiana Early Care and Education Commission must be specifically addressed.
				4. Explore incentives for businesses to help employees overcome childcare challenges by providing on-site space for providers, offering subsidies to employees, expanding family leave policies, and other strategies. 5. Expand access to quality childcare for Louisiana's postsecondary student-parents, to accelerate enrollment and completion. 6. Identify specific solutions for family care homes. 7. Create and expand Ready Start Networks.
4.	Trauma-informed supports	Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Other Agencies and Entities Focused on Human Development	Program, Funding	1. As families begin considering sending their children back to care centers and schools, it is critical to address the trauma that children and families have suffered. With the support of the Louisiana Department of Health, agencies, educators, and service providers should maintain a focus on trauma-informed approaches. 2. Communities need guidance, funding, and expert referral information to respectfully support families during this transition.
5.	Proactive resourcing	Agencies and Entities Focused on Human Development	Tools/Processes, Policy, Funding	1. Resilience is about preventing bad outcomes. 2. Preventative poverty alleviation strategies must be developed through collaborative engagements between human development stakeholders. 3. Adoption of the Atlanta Federal Reserve CLIFF tool to support informed client coaching and encourage proactive resource leveraging for education-to-employment strategies to build resilient families 4. Work with the Atlanta Federal Reserve to build the state-customized CLIFF tool within six months.

Bridging the Digital Divide

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Provide immediate and tangible sup-port for existing broadband initiatives in order to rapidly accelerate statewide availability	State Government, Local Governments, Telecom Partners	Funding, Governance, Process, Policy	1. Accelerate the important current time-line and goals for the Broadband for Every-one in Louisiana (BEL) Commission to align with the urgent need for all educational and economic development processes in Louisiana to have full internet access. 2. Fully engage the RLC (or appropriate agency) to lead and coordinate the collaboration effort necessary to achieve full access for all. 3. Expand the use of the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI), where available, by public-sector subscribers. 4. Use CARES Act funds for LONI systems, to make options for broadband access available to all schools in need, including those in rural and urban communities. 5. Aggressively develop opportunities for re-sources to support the infrastructure needed for full and effective implementation. 6. Review all permit-ting requirements with the intent to stream-line processes for approval and project implementation.
2.	Incentivize partners to pursue installation of broadband infrastructure and implementation of broadband access	State Government, Local Governments, Telecom Partners	Funding, Governance, Process, Policy	1. Adopt models started in Mississippi and Arkansas to expand high-speed broadband service to rural markets. 2. Codify cooperation and collaboration between utilities/co-ops and private telecom providers. 3. Develop financial incentives for providers that include rural or less profitable areas. 4. Create private/public partnership opportunities in the interest of developing a complete penetration of services in hard-to-reach areas.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
3.	Implement and support alternative methods for broadband connectivity	State Government, Local Governments, Telecom Partners	Funding, Governance, Process, Policy	1. Expand RF network availability for both long-haul and last-mile connectivity where traditional cable/ fiber networks are cost-prohibitive. 2. Increase mobile network capacity in rural and underserved areas. 3. Pursue innovative and emerging broad-band opportunities (e.g., Space X Starlink). 4. State-level campaign targeting sectors of the public currently not successfully using the Internet, to educate on ways and methods to gain wire-less access until full broadband is available.
4.	Commit dedicated resources to the expansion of broadband access across the state	State Government, Local Governments	Funding, Policy	1. Identify and aggressively pursue available federal, state, and private grants and other funding specifically targeting broadband connectivity (e.g., Rural Digital Opportunity Fund). 2. Explore options to financially incentivize private industry to speed up availability of Internet access. 3. Explore options to assist in the payment of last-mile connectivity infrastructure.
5.	Promote opportunities which encourage more rapid, widespread adoption of broadband technologies	State Government, Local Governments, Telecom Partners, Residents, Businesses	Funding, Governance, Process, Policy	1. Recruit, or encourage expansion of, companies with well-paying “remote work” opportunities. 2. Increase both public- and private-sector adoption of “remote work” opportunities for pre-COVID-19 traditional “in-office” roles. 3. Education (preschool, K-12 and postsecondary) should align to produce a stronger STEM student and graduate, preparing them to succeed in the workplace of the future. 4. Further educate end users to become active subscribers and users of the expanded services as they come online.

SECTION 2: REOPENING GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATION PROVIDERS

2A. Public Health Guidance for the 2020-2021 School Year - EMBARGOED Until 6/25/20
To: Louisiana Public and Non-Public Schools
From: Louisiana Department of Health

Re: Public Health Guidance for the 2020-2021 School Year in light of the Governor's Roadmap to Restarting Louisiana

In light of the Governor's Roadmap to Restarting Louisiana, we are issuing guidance relative to opening public and non-public school facilities to serve students in the 2020-2021 school year. This guidance is relative to operating schools in Phases 1, 2, and Phase 3 of reopening.

This guidance is based on current medical knowledge of how COVID-19 is transmitted, primarily through close physical contact, vocal and musical activities during which aerosol particles might be emitted, and touching shared surfaces or objects.

Protective measures in school settings include:
- Social distancing, achieved by establishing and, for the maximum number of days possible, maintaining small groups of individuals that minimally interact with other groups or individuals, including in shared indoor spaces;
- Monitoring students and staff for symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat; and
- Practicing frequent environmental cleaning and hand-washing.

Additionally, and as defined by federal guidelines, vulnerable students should not attend and vulnerable staff members, including environmental services staff, should not enter the facility. Vulnerable school bus drivers and aides should not provide transportation services to students.

Guidelines	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Maximum group size	10, including adults	25, including adults	50, including adults
Younger students	Maintain static groups, understanding that individuals may come into close contact and may not be wearing masks		
Older students	If students are able to maintain physical distance, the group's composition may change. Students maintain physical distance of six feet in classroom / indoor settings to the maximum extent possible.		
Physical standards	• Groups convene indoors in rooms enclosed by walls or partitions • High-touch surfaces (e.g., desks, doorknobs) are cleaned before and after each group's use • Groups are separated outdoors but do not require a physical barrier • Limit crowding at entry and exit points: maintain maximum group sizes and physical distance recommendations to the maximum extent possible		
Athletics	Refrain from contact and high-risk sports	Contact / high-risk sports allowable within defined groups	
Symptom monitoring	• Assess students on arrival and throughout the day, including initial temperature check • Establish an area that can be used to isolate sick students • Clean and disinfect surfaces in the isolation area after the sick student has gone home		
Environmental Cleaning and Personal Hygiene	• High-touch surfaces are cleaned multiple times throughout the day, including bathrooms • Hand-washing at arrival, at least every two hours, before and after eating, before and after using outdoor play equipment, and at exit • Adults and secondary students (5th grade / 10 years old), as able, should wear cloth masks to the maximum extent possible, most importantly at en-try and exit, and during transitions within the school building. Individuals with severe breathing difficulties should not wear masks.		
Transportation	Maximum school bus capacity, including adults		
	25 percent	50 percent	75 percent
	• School bus passengers ride one per seat with every other seat empty • Members of the same household may sit in the same seat or adjacent seats, with an empty seat between household groups	• Space passengers to the maximum extent possible • Members of the same household may sit in the same seat or adjacent seat	
	• To increase airflow, windows should be open to the maximum extent possible • High-touch surfaces are cleaned after each group's use • The bus is cleaned at least once per day		

Protecting Yourself and Others in Louisiana		
Practice Social Distancing	Wash Your Hands, Cover Your Cough	Take Caution with Louisianans Who Are at Risk
Even if you feel well, stay at home as much as possible. In public, keep at least six feet distance from others. Avoid unnecessary appointments.	Cover your cough and sneezes. Use your elbow or a tissue. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.	Take special caution to avoid exposing the elderly and people with underlying health conditions. Avoid visiting those most at risk, and call instead. Offer to help with groceries and other needs.

For information regarding COVID-19, please visit the LDH website and CDC website: https://www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus and https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html, and follow the below general guidelines.

2B. REOPENING GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC AND NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS - EMBARGOED UNTIL 6/25/20

REOPENING GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC AND NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The State of Louisiana is following the guidance of public health experts when making decisions regarding the resumption of instruction in public and non-public school facilities.

Louisiana's plan for reopening statewide outlines phases that are initiated once certain public health criteria are met. Throughout these phases, restrictions will be gradually relaxed as the public health situation improves, allowing greater flexibility, including the potential of resuming school building-based instruction.

In Phases 1, 2, and 3, school facilities may open to students for in-person instruction with certain restrictions in place. These restrictions are mandated by the Louisiana Department of Health.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), in consultation with the Louisiana Department of Health, offers the following supportive guidance in order to assist schools in planning as it relates to public health guidelines, as well as limiting the spread of COVID-19.

NOTE: Guidance may change in accordance with updates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Louisiana's Office of Public Health. Guidance is based on current medical knowledge of how COVID-19 is transmitted, primarily through close physical contact, vocal and musical activities during which aerosol particles might be emitted, and touching shared surfaces or objects.

Table of Contents

The following sections contain both Department of Health guidelines and supportive guidance for keeping children and staff healthy and safe at school and in extracurricular activities.

Protecting Yourself and Others in Louisiana	
Group Size, Spacing Requirements, and Physical Standards	Implement social and physical distancing strategies
	Change student drop-off and pick-up processes to limit contact
	Ensure that extracurricular and athletic activities follow established safety and hygiene protocols
Symptom Monitoring	Develop and communicate wellness policy for students and staff
	Screen students for sickness upon arrival
	Implement isolation measures if a student becomes sick, and follow with a cleaning and disinfecting processes
	Address vulnerable individuals
Environmental Cleaning and Personal Hygiene	Ensure healthy personal hygiene
	Intensify cleaning and disinfecting efforts
Additional Operating Considerations	Ensure healthy food preparation and meal service
	Ensure transportation staff are following safety and hygiene protocols

Group Size, Spacing Requirements, and Physical Standards

IMPLEMENT SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

The following sections contain both Department of Health guidelines and supportive guidance for keeping children and staff healthy and safe at school and in extracurricular activities.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Maximum group size	10, including adults	25, including adults	50, including adults
Younger students	Maintain static groups, understanding that individuals may come into close contact and may not be wearing masks		
Older students	If students are able to maintain physical distance, the group's composition may change. Students maintain physical distance of six feet in classroom / indoor settings to the maximum extent possible.		
Physical standards	• Groups convene indoors in rooms enclosed by walls or partitions • High-touch surfaces (e.g., desks, doorknobs) are cleaned before and after each group's use • Groups are separated outdoors but do not require a physical barrier • Limit crowding at entry and exit points: maintain maximum group sizes and physical distance recommendations to the maximum extent possible		

School Facility Use Considerations

- Remove unused desks and furniture in classrooms to maximize physical distance and minimize objects that must be cleaned.
- Establish distance between the teacher's desk/board and students' desks.
- Identify and utilize large spaces (e.g., gymnasiums, auditoriums, outside spaces) to enable physical distancing in Phases 2 and 3.

School Transition Considerations

- Provide additional time for transitions.
- Designate areas of the hallway (i.e., lanes) as flow paths to keep students separated students to minimize congregation of students.
- Plan staggered class changes (e.g., by hall, odd/even room numbers, grade/discipline) to decrease number of students in hallways at one time.

CHANGE STUDENT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCESSES TO LIMIT CONTACT

- Ask students to enter and exit in single-file lines to enable physical distance.
- Establish one or two entry and egress points that enable the flow of students to move in a single direction.
- Do not allow parents in the school building except under extenuating circumstances; adults entering the building should wash or sanitize hands prior to entering.
- Establish hand hygiene stations at the entrance to the facility so that students can clean their hands before they enter. If a sink with soap and water is not available, provide hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol and supervise its use.

LARGE GATHERINGS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Assemblies are limited to maximum group sizes and with appropriate physical distancing in place. For younger students unable to maintain physical distance, maintain static groups.
- All attendees should wear a face covering.
- Students and teachers wash hands before and after events.
- Discontinue off-site field trips.
- After-school programs may continue but must adhere to maximum group sizes and physical distance protocols. For younger students unable to maintain physical distance, maintain static groups.

ATHLETICS, BAND, AND VOCAL MUSIC

- Athletic activities are allowed to resume with the recommendations put forth in the Louisiana High School Athletic Association's Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities.
- Band and vocal music may resume in Phase 3, with physical distance recommendations in effect.

Symptom Monitoring

DEVELOP AND COMMUNICATE WELLNESS POLICY FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

School systems should develop and communicate a wellness policy for both students and staff that requires sick students and staff to stay home. Individuals who have a fever of 100.4°F or above, or other signs of illness, should not be admitted to the facility.

- Communicate to parents the importance of keeping children home when they are sick, the steps being taken to ensure the health and safety of their children, and other important information related to limiting COVID-19 exposure.
    - See this sample letter to families. The letter to families should outline all health and safety precautions taken by your facility.
    - Another sample can be found from Child Care Aware of America.

SCREEN CHILDREN FOR ILLNESS UPON ARRIVAL

Whenever possible, schools should ensure that a school nurse or health care professional is available to support screening and isolation procedures. Individuals who have a fever of 100.4°F or above or other signs of illness must not be admitted to the facility.

- Ask the student or parent/guardian to confirm that the student has not taken fever reducing medication in the last 24 hours and does not have shortness of breath, sore throat, or a cough.
- Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness, particularly shortness of breath or cough.
- If a student registers a temperature of 100.4 or higher, temperature should be taken a second time 5 to 10 minutes later

Examples of how to conduct temperature screenings are found here.

IMPLEMENT ISOLATION MEASURES IF A STUDENT BECOMES SICK, FOLLOW WITH CLEANING AND DISINFECTING PROCESSES, AND CONSULT PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS

It is important to establish a space to isolate students who become sick, and to be prepared with a cleaning and disinfecting process.

- Create an area that can be used to isolate a sick student. Ensure proper adult supervision of an isolated child as needed and based on age.
- If a sick child has been isolated in the facility, clean and disinfect surfaces in the isolation room or area after the sick child has gone home.
- In the event that a student, staff member, or visitor to the school is or is presumed to be positive for COVID-19, contact regional or local public health officials to determine any additional steps related to communication, quarantining practices, enhanced cleaning or disinfection processes, or school facility closure. State of Louisiana contact tracers will conduct contact tracing activities, including school-based contacts.

ADDRESS VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

A key concern is whether vulnerable individuals may be at increased risk of infection and severe disease by attending school in person. There is no validated data on how much risk these individuals incur by attending school in person and individuals will need to make the decision to attend in close consultation with their health care provider. Furthermore, OSHA statutes on employer responsibilities during a pandemic remain unclear.

School workers are defined as being at "medium risk" of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 and while schools are required to provide reasonable accommodation for a workplace safe from health threats, the definition of that accommodation in this setting has not yet been adjudicated. Schools and employees should continue to work closely with legal counsel to determine rights and responsibilities as this area becomes clearer in the months ahead.

In the event that a significant proportion of staff members are unable to return to the school facility, consider developing an innovative staffing plan.

Environmental Cleaning and Personal Hygiene

ENSURE HEALTHY PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Adults and secondary students (5th grade / 10 years old), as able, should wear cloth masks to the maximum extent possible, most importantly at entry and exit, and during transitions within the school building. Individuals with severe breathing difficulties should not wear masks. Facial coverings may be homemade or disposable level one (basic) grade surgical masks. N95 respirators are not necessary.

- Students and teachers should have scheduled hand washing with soap and water or hand sanitizer every two hours as well as at the following times as found in CDC guidance including at arrival, before and after eating, before and after using outdoor play equipment, and at exit.
- Students should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer after changing any classroom; teachers in the classroom should wash their hands or use sanitizer every time a new group of students enters their room.
- Gloves are not necessary except for custodial staff or teachers cleaning their classrooms.
- Display COVID-19 informational signs in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs, such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering.

INTENSIFY CLEANING AND DISINFECTING EFFORTS

Evaluate school facilities to determine what kinds of surfaces and materials comprise each area. Consult the CDC for guidance on establishing cleaning and disinfecting protocol for various surface types and materials. Considerations include outdoor areas and areas unoccupied for more than 7 days.

Ventilation

Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.

Water Systems

To minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water, take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown. Drinking fountains should be cleaned and sanitized. Encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains or consider closing shared water fountains.

Routine Cleaning Schedule

- Frequently touched surfaces should undergo cleaning with a commercially available cleaning solution, including EPA-approved disinfectants or a dilute bleach solution, multiple times throughout the day. This includes:
    - Light switches, doors, benches, banisters, and bathroom fixtures
    - Surfaces and objects in libraries, computer labs, and other settings where "hands-on" materials and equipment are used
    - Student desks, which should be cleaned before and after each student's use
- Minimize sharing of materials between students.
- Playground equipment and athletic equipment should be cleaned daily or as necessary, depending on frequency of use.
- To protect their skin, cleaning staff should wear gloves when performing cleaning activities.

Additional Operating Considerations

ENSURE SAFETY AND HYGIENE PROTOCOLS ARE ESTABLISHED FOR SHARED COMMUNAL SPACES

- Limit use of indoor shared spaces, such as cafeterias and gymnasiums, to maximum group sizes, ensure physical distance and mask use, and clean between each group's use.
- Close shared water fountains.
- Install protective barriers in shared areas, such as front office, reception areas, libraries.

ENSURE HEALTHY FOOD PREPARATION AND MEAL SERVICE

- Students, teachers, and cafeteria staff wash hands before and after every meal.
- If possible, classrooms should be utilized for eating in place.
- Students may bring food from home.
- School-supplied meals should be delivered to classrooms with disposable utensils.
- If cafeterias must be used, stagger meal times for each group, adhere to maximum group size, and ensure six feet of distance between students to the maximum extent possible. Disposable utensils should be used.
- Mark spaced lines to enter the cafeteria and serving lines; designate entrances and exit flow paths; ensure single-file lines for food lines and disposal.
- Utilize outdoor seating as practical and appropriate.

Food and Nutrition staff should:

- Clean frequently touched surfaces such as kitchen countertops, cafeteria and service tables, door handles, carts, and trays, throughout the day. Follow the directions on the cleaning product's label and clean hands afterwards.
- Practice proper hand hygiene. This is an important infection control measure. With appropriate hand hygiene, gloves are not necessary for workers who are not involved in food preparation. Wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol can be used, but not as a substitute for cleaning hands with soap and water.

ENSURE TRANSPORTATION STAFF FOLLOW SAFETY AND HYGIENE PROTOCOLS

The risks associated with student transportation in buses have not been studied to date. As a result, these recommendations are derived from school operating procedures and the best "reasonable standard" given feasibility constraints.

Seating and Social Distancing.

Buses should operate at 25 percent of their normal capacity in Phase 1, 50 percent of their normal capacity during Phase 2, and 75 percent of their normal capacity during Phase 3, with spacing between passengers according to capacity.

- Members of the same household may sit in the same seat or adjacent seats with one empty seat between household groups.

Symptom Monitoring and Personal Hygiene

- All passengers should engage in hand hygiene upon entering the bus. Hand sanitizer should not exceed 80 percent alcohol concentration and containers should be securely closed, secured against shifting, and protected from damage.
- Facial coverings should be worn by all staff and students at all times.
- For bus stops, consider developing a communication plan to encourage parents and students to maintain social distance at bus stops and to avoid congregating in groups while waiting for the bus.

Operational Standards

- Windows should be open at all times to facilitate air flow.
- Stagger unloading of buses at school to minimize student group size as they enter school and to allow six feet of distance while entering.
- Clean high-touch surfaces, including seats and handrails, after each group's use. The bus should be cleaned at least once per day. Additional cleaning and disinfection guidance is available here.

Transportation Standards for Students with Special Needs

If a school system provides transportation for medically fragile children, consider reserving specific seats for these children. These seats would not be used for other student during the day, with special precautions for disinfecting. Alternately, arrange for separate transportation for that student.

2C. Reopening Guidelines for Higher Education Institutions of Higher Education – Restart Louisiana

These guidelines are recommended and subject to modifications after shift to Phase 2

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Principles	Institutions online, campuses closed to all but essential personnel	Institutional plans to • Monitor, test, isolate • Adjust class structures to accommodate physical distancing • Provide hand sanitizer stations in buildings wherever possible • Have a cleaning and disinfection plan in place • Utilize technology to prevent over-sized gatherings	Institutional plans to • Monitor, test, isolate • Adjust class structures to accommodate physical distancing • Provide hand sanitizer stations in buildings wherever possible • Have a cleaning and disinfection plan in place • Utilize technology to prevent over-sized gatherings	Institutional plans to • Monitor, test, isolate • Adjust class structures to accommodate physical distancing • Provide hand sanitizer stations in buildings wherever possible • Have a cleaning and disinfection plan in place • Utilize technology to prevent over-sized gatherings
Personal Health Checks	Students and staff continue to check health (fever, signs of illness) throughout Phase 0 and stay home if sick	Students and staff continue to check health (fever, signs of illness) throughout Phase 1 and stay home if sick	Students and staff continue to check health (fever, signs of illness) throughout Phase 2 and stay home if sick	Institutional plans to • Monitor, test, isolate • Adjust class structures to accommodate physical distancing • Provide hand sanitizer stations in buildings wherever possible • Have a cleaning and disinfection plan in place • Utilize technology to prevent over-sized gatherings
Timeline	March 13-May 14, 2020	May 15, 2020 until announced shift to Phase 2	When announced by the Governor	When announced by the Governor
Group Sizes	10 and under, with physical distancing, for essential coursework	25% of capacity in room/venue, with physical distancing	50% of capacity in room/venue, with physical distancing	50% of capacity in room/venue, with physical distancing, unless new guidance is provided

These guidelines are recommended and subject to modifications after shift to Phase 2

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Masks	Cloth masks required	Cloth masks required	Cloth masks strongly recommended	Cloth masks strongly recommended until statewide or national guidelines change
Students, Faculty and Staff	Stay-at-Home Orders	Physical distancing in public/common areas	Physical distancing in public/common areas	Physical distancing in public/common areas
High-Risk students, faculty and staff OR with high-risk household members	Stay-at-Home Orders	Continue remote courses/telework Limited public interactions with cloth mask and physical distancing	Continue remote courses/telework Limited public interactions with cloth mask and physical distancing	Continue remote courses/telework until statewide or national guidelines change. Public interactions permitted with cloth mask and physical distancing
Outside Community	Closed to Public	May 15, 2020 until announced shift to Phase 2	When announced by the Governor	Limited with physical distancing recommending the usage of cloth masks
Follow CDC Guidelines for cleaning protocols in each phase	Strict environmental cleaning of all buildings	Strict environmental cleaning of all buildings Enhanced cleaning of common areas	Shared classroom space must be cleaned daily Recommended having cleaning wipes available for student, faculty, and staff use. This will allow students to wipe seat and area before leaving class. High touch areas in common areas and bathrooms cleaned multiple times a day (e.g. door handles, sinks)	Routine Cleaning

2C. Reopening Guidelines for Higher Education Institutions of Higher Education – Restart Louisiana

These guidelines are recommended and subject to modifications after shift to Phase 2

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
	Summer 2020: online, with the exception of CTE cours es and a few lab-based courses *Fall 2020:* resume face-to-face instruction with physical distancing limitations			
Lectures	Lectures Online Spring 2020 Semester None: Remote Learning	Online Summer School If face-to-face classes offered, then 10 or fewer (or 25% room capacity) with physical distancing	50% of classroom capacity, with physical distancing In larger classes with stationary seats, mark the seats students can use Develop plans to minimize number of students in hallways and common areas be-tween classes	50% of classroom capacity, with physical distancing. In larger classes with stationary seats, mark the seats students can use Develop plans to minimize number of students in hallways and common are-as between classes.
Labs & CTE	Minimal – only if needed to support the health care surge or other essential workers. Minimal – only if needed to support the health care surge or other essential workers.	Essential course-work: Limit 10 and under or 25% capacity of the room size Physical distancing between students Enhanced cleaning between classes	Active 50% capacity of the room size Physical distancing between students Enhanced cleaning of Lab and CTE space	Active 50% capacity of the room size Physical distancing between students Enhanced cleaning of Lab and CTE space.
Field work/ internships	Remote only	Active, with physical distancing	Active, with physical distancing	Active, with physical distancing
Computer Labs/ Library	Computer labs open to support students remaining on campus only	Limited: physical distancing between computer stations and enhanced cleaning daily	Physical distancing between computer stations and enhanced cleaning daily Student cleaning protocol between computer users. Students wipe area before and after use	

These guidelines are recommended and subject to modifications after shift to Phase 2

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
	Summer 2020: online, with the exception of CTE courses and a few lab-based courses *Fall 2020:* resume face-to-face instruction with physical distancing limitations			
On-campus labs	Limited to critical functions only; enhanced cleaning	Partially open with physical distancing and cloth masks. 25% capacity and enhanced cleaning	Open with physical distancing and cloth masks, if able 50% capacity and enhanced cleaning	Open with physical distancing and cloth masks, if able 50% capacity and enhanced cleaning
Field/ On-location	Essential only. Limited to car-based travel	Essential only. Limited to car-based travel	Priority research only, unless state guidance changes	Priority research only, unless state guidance changes
Human subjects	No face-to-face and essential only	No face-to-face and essential only unless COVID-19 related research	When possible, follow public health guidelines, including cloth masks and physical distancing	When possible, follow public health guidelines, including cloth masks and physical distancing, until statewide or national guidelines change.
Residential Protocols In all phases: educational signage about health and safety practices displayed	Majority of residential students sent home Limited access for those students who cannot travel home Identity quarantine locations on campus Disinfect regularly common areas, bathroom areas and bathrooms Close all common lounges	Dorms: Limited access for those students who cannot travel home Continue isolation/ quarantine locations on campus Disinfect common areas and bathrooms regularly Physical distancing protocols strictly en-forced Limit dorm access to residents only, no outside casual visitors	Dorms: Recommended single occupancy If single occupancy is not possible, the IHEs need to provide space to isolate and quarantine. If one student tests positive for COVID-19, then that student will need to be isolated until 3 days after illness is over and at least 14 days, whichever is longer. Roommate will need to be quarantined for 14 days. Continue isolation/ quarantine locations on campus. Disinfect common areas, bathrooms regularly, concentrating on high touch areas like door handles and sinks For dorms with shared hallway bathroom space, enhanced cleaning Allow only residents in dorms. Limit external student presence.	Dorms: Normal occupancy IHEs need to continue to provide a space to isolate and quarantine. If one student tests positive for COVID-19, then that student will need to be isolated until 3-days after illness is over and at least 14 days, whichever is longer. Roommate will need to be quarantined for 14 days. Continue isolation/quarantine locations on campus. Disinfect common areas and bathrooms regularly, concentrating on high touch areas like door handles and sinks For dorms with shared hallway bathroom space, enhanced cleaning.

These guidelines are recommended and subject to modifications after shift to Phase 2

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Summer 2020: online, with the exception of CTE cours es and a few lab-based courses *Fall 2020:* resume face-to-face instruction with physical distancing limitations				
Dining Protocols	Limited access for students still on campus Carry-out only	Limited access for students still on campus Primarily carry-out Physically distant seating at 25% space capacity Hand sanitizing stations upon entrance	Dine-in and carry-out Physically distance seating at 50% capacity Stagger seating time to limit large numbers of congregating students When possible, hand sanitizing stations upon entrance	Drive-in and carry-out Physically distant seating at 50% capacity Stagger seating time to limit large numbers of congregating students When possible, hand sanitizing stations upon entrance
Student Events	Canceled	Limited to 25% capacity of venue size with physical distancing and masks, if able	Limited to 50% capacity of venue size with physical distancing	Limited to 50% capacity of venue size with physical distancing
Student Health Centers	Offices closed as campuses closed Telehealth appointments available	Operational as cam-puses reopen Telehealth appointments still available	Open with safety precautions	Open with safety precautions
Water Fountains	Campuses closed	Encourage use of individual water bottles. Prevent usage of shared space water fountains. Acceptable to use mounted bottle filing stations	Encourage use of individual water bottles. Prevent usage of shared space water fountains. Acceptable to use mounted bottle filing stations	Encourage use of individual water bottles. Prevent usage of shared space water fountains. Acceptable to use mounted bottle filing stations

These guidelines are recommended and subject to modifications after shift to Phase 2

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Summer 2020: online, with the exception of CTE cours es and a few lab-based courses *Fall 2020:* resume face-to-face instruction with physical distancing limitations				
Elevators	Campuses closed	Cloth mask with physical distancing on all campus elevators. Number of people on the elevator is dependent on the size of elevator	Cloth mask with physical distancing on all campus elevators. Number of people on the elevator is dependent on the size of elevator	Cloth mask with physical distancing on all campus elevators. Number of people on the elevator is dependent on the size of elevator
Student Unions/ Common Areas	Closed as campuses closed	Cloth mask with physical distancing on all campus elevators. Number of people on the elevator is dependent on the size of elevator	Cloth mask with physical distancing on all campus elevators. Number of people on the elevator is dependent on the size of elevator	Strict physical distancing in public/common areas Enhanced cleaning protocols
Student Recreation Centers	Closed as campuses closed	Strict physical distancing 25% occupancy Pools: Lane swimming only Enhanced cleaning protocols	Strict physical distancing 50% occupancy Pools: Lane swimming only Enhanced cleaning protocols	Open with routine cleaning Continue physical distancing until statewide or national guidelines change
Intramural Sports	None. Campus activities suspended	Non-contact sports only with physical distancing and individual student sports equipment usage/cleaning and water protocols	Non-contact sports only with physical distancing and individual student sports equipment usage/cleaning and water protocols	Non-contact sports and contact sports within defined groups

Athletics:
Follow Conference Guidelines

These guidelines are recommended and subject to modifications after shift to Phase 2

	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Summer 2020: online, with the exception of CTE cours es and a few lab-based courses *Fall 2020:* resume face-to-face instruction with physical distancing limitations				
Transportation	Essential travel only	Limited seating on buses at 10-person capacity or 25% capacity Mark seats where riders can sit Bus windows open if possible Enhanced cleaning protocol Wear cloth masks	Limited seating on buses at 50% capacity Mark seats where riders can sit Bus windows open if possible Enhanced cleaning protocol Wear cloth masks, as able	Limited seating on buses at 50% capacity Mark seats where riders can sit Bus windows open if possible Enhanced cleaning protocol Wear cloth masks, as able
Open Office Spaces	On campus essential personnel only Telework, of possible Wear a mask in public/common areas, as able	On campus essential personnel only or phased to work at 20% Telework, of possible Wear a mask in public/common areas, as able	Telework or phased return to work at 50% Wear mask in public/common areas, as able Enhanced cleaning protocols	No restrictions Wear mask in public/common areas, as able until statewide of national guide-lines change Public-facing offices – limited access with physical distancing and regular cleaning
Single-Occupancy Office	On-campus essential personnel only Telework, if possible	Telework or phased return to work at 20%	Telework or phased return to work at 50%	No restrictions

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Signage about expectations for personal hygiene, physical distancing and masks for students, faculty and staff needs to be posted in buildings.

2. Add information about student mask requirements to the Code of Conduct

3. Greek housing and life: Follow grouping and venue guidance for housing, dining, and activities. If single-occupancy rooms are unavailable, then the Greek organization must have a place to isolate a sick student 3 days after no fever without fever reducing medicines and at least 14 days from onset of symptoms, and quarantine any exposed roommate who is not sick for 14 days.

4. Student orientation sessions can be held if IHE is able to follow the grouping and venue size guidelines with individual student and enhanced cleaning protocols.

5. For general COVID-19 related questions, students, faculty and staff can dial 211. The state's 24/7 COVID-19 mental health hotline is 1.866.310.7977. Publish and post signage with hotline information.

Energy

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Energy Sector serves the critical needs of our diverse consumer base within Louisiana while supplying essential products around the world. Equitable treatment of our consumers and employees is paramount to ensure the long-term viability of our state. As we look for ways to restart our economy, we must also be empathetic to the needs of all customers, ensuring that cost-effective, reliable products and services are available to all.

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
The Energy Sector was deemed essential business during COVID-19, and thus continued operations but not before implementing certain safeguards to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for personnel. Though generally operating, the significant demand destruction in the marketplace has led to scaled down production, significant revenue loss, and unfortunately reductions in employment. While uncertain, projections are for reduced demand in the oil and gas and some elements of the chemicals' sectors to last 3-5 years.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
The significant reduction in demand for refined products along with current market conditions hit the sector hard, as some were forced to lay-off employees or file for bankruptcy. The demand destruction created impacts throughout the supply chain within the oil and gas sector from Upstream production curtailments to refined product storage.

As an essential sector, much of the businesses maintained day-to-day operations throughout the COVID-19 health crisis. This included operational, safety and environmental compliance. These compliance activities may require inspections of facilities from third parties. As the health crisis is ever evolving, and the sector continues to learn about proper screening and testing protocols, these third-party inspections bringing additional people to sites held the risk of potentially exposing critical staff.

During the COVID-19 crisis, social distancing protocols have affected certain customer responses to utilities. The customers are enduring financial hardships which have affected their ability to pay their bills, and orders were issued suspending disconnections for non-payment.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Expansion of Federal Funding Programs	Federal & State Government, Residents, Business Owners	Funding	• Continue / create support for low to moderate income. Includes expansion / revision of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program's (LIHEAP) application, qualification and funding provisions. • Create a funding program for small business support.
2.	Increase Testing Availability & PPE	State & Local Government, Energy Sector, Residents	Funding	• Continue to increase testing capacity both for the virus and antibody. • Increase health centers and mobile units for the lower income population. • Increase PPE availability – create working groups between industry and govt to create a stockpile.
3.	Self-Auditing / Self-Reporting	State Government, Energy Sector	Policy / Legislative	• Reduces human interaction helping to prevent the spreading COVID-19. • Reduces the number of visitors at a facility. • These programs are very common in other states with regulated entities.
4.	Stimulate Oil & Gas Investment in Louisiana	State Government, Energy Sector, Residents	Policy / Legislative	• Eliminate, phase out or revisions of certain taxes: corporate franchise tax (HB 17 of 2020 1st Extraordinary Session), payroll tax, property taxes. • Address the Net Operating Loss deductions. • Expand the application of the quality jobs program (HB 19 of 2020 1st Extraordinary Session). • The Department of Revenue reduces and/or waives penalties that are involved in tax disputes. • Passage of constitutional amendment HB 360 from the 2020 Regular Legislative Session. • Support of HB 845 from the 2020 Regular Legislative Session. • Continued support for Act 46 and any related rule-making.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Improving Infrastructure	All Business Sectors, Residents	Policy / Legislation, Funding	• Hardening the utility grid. • Need support in the recovery period to continue investment. • Types of hardening must be balanced. • End user affordability must be taken into consideration.
2.	Baseload Power	State Government, All Business Sectors, Residents	Policy / Legislation	• Continued commitment to baseload power. • Utilize affordable and reliable energies to serve consumer needs. • Continued support of Act 46 and any related rule making. – Preempts local regulation of the use of natural gas utility service. • Support House Bill 39 amending the Louisiana Electric Utility Investment Recovery Securitization Act to include COVID-19 demand and revenue destruction.
3.	Improving Broadband	State Government, Energy Sector, Residents	Policy / Legislation	• Increasing broadband access across Louisiana, especially in rural communities. • Necessary to provide support for online education, telemedicine and telecommuting. • Continued support for HCR 77 and HCR 78. • Passing SB 10 of the 2020 1st Extraordinary Session.
4.	SIMPLE Plan (Stimulate Investment to Maximize Parish and Local Economies)	Local & State Government, All Business Sectors – Small and Large Business Owners	Policy / Legislation	• HB 23 of 2020 1st Extraordinary Session - Constitutional Amendment) Authorizes certain agreements that provide for payments in lieu of ad valorem taxes (Item #28). • Implement temporary incentive for all employers that will spark immediate investment in Louisiana. • Provides incentive for employers to invest capital.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				• Local and state governments benefit from tax payments. • Immediate, high impact infusion of property tax income to assist parishes and local governments in funding economic recovery efforts.
5.	Investing in New Energies	Government, Energy Sector, Residents	DED, DNR, DEQ Policy	• Energy sector needs to investigate investing in affordable, reliable and sustainable new energies. • Investing in new technologies to create fleet diversification for investors. • Utilize Louisiana's geographic advantages for additional and future CCUS projects.
6.	Study on Economic Ramification of COVID-19 Crisis	Government, All Business Sectors, Business Owners, Residents, Education	Policy, Modify Procedures	• Impacts on the municipal utility systems. • Periodic data collection from municipal systems to understand and address the subsequent economic impacts from the crisis, into 2021 and thereafter.
7.	Stimulate Energy Sector Business Growth in Louisiana	Government, Energy Sector, Residents	Policy/Legislation, Funding	• Work to attract corporate headquarters to locate in Louisiana. • More innovation and research at the universities. – Example would be LNG related research and innovation in Southwest LA. • Secure local, physical locations for ancillary services supporting industry; such as cyber security.

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment

The Energy Sector is extremely important to Louisiana's economy as it encompasses several vital businesses that employ thousands of Louisianans, provide tax revenue to the state, and life sustaining resources to the residents like electric power and fuels. The Energy Sector has been defined by this task force to include Liquified Natural Gas, electric utilities, refining, petrochemicals, onshore and offshore exploration and production and the associated logistics and distribution.

The oil and gas sector is one of Louisiana's leading industries. It accounts for approximately 260,000 jobs throughout Louisiana and brings in approximately $2 billion in annual state taxes, licenses and fees. The reopening of this sector should focus on increasing demand for products and the related positive impact on employment. While many essential employees were still reporting to work during the COVID-19 crisis, the focus had been on reducing employee density to protect these essential teams from virus spread. The natural gas, oil, and chemical industry, along with service companies, should be supported without overly burdensome requirements to scale up to full operations again.

Because of the impacts on global demand, all parts of Louisiana that participate in the oil and gas sector have seen and will continue to see impacts. Utility providers that serve oil and gas customers may see more demand destruction in the southern parishes, however, electrical demand reduction for commercial and industrial customers is being seen in all parishes. Additionally, Parish and municipal revenues may experience a significant drop due to decreases in sales and severance tax income. Depending on potential decreases in businesses and jobs within these Parishes there could be subsequent impacts such as real estate demand (commercial and residential), significant decreases in property taxes and inventory taxes. Globally, many countries are using the COVID-19 period to facilitate a transition away from oil and gas towards other forms of energy. There is some belief that demand could be reduced structurally and not recover in some segments. Electrification is expected to continue to grow. There is also a widely held belief that reductions in business travel, working and being educated remotely, will grow in popularity further reducing demand for refined products.

The Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) industry is providing a unique opportunity for Louisiana to deliver clean, secure, and affordable energy to the world. Between executed and currently proposed projects, the LNG industry represents over $80 billion of investment in Louisiana's energy infrastructure and has supported tens of thousands of jobs across the state. The LNG industry is a major economic driver for Louisiana, with one facility alone generating over $11 billion in economic activity. Currently, there are two operating LNG facilities with one under construction and several more in development.

As an essential sector, the LNG industry has maintained day-to-day operations throughout the current health crisis. In order to continue providing a safe and healthy work environment for personnel, the industry implemented safeguards such as work group isolation, revised shift schedules and reduced staffing levels in order to accommodate social distancing guidelines. One LNG facility installed temporary housing on site to isolate essential operating personnel to ensure uninterrupted operations. Other additional measures implemented include biometric screenings at sites, enhanced sanitation of infrastructure and common areas, updated processes to minimize physical contact and enhanced use of personal protective equipment.

The utilities sector includes companies that provide electricity and/or gas to residential, commercial and industrial customers in Louisiana and is composed of investor owned utilities (IOUs), private utilities, cooperatives and municipalities. Louisiana utilities are regulated by the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) except for New Orleans which is regulated by the New Orleans City Council. Providing reliable power to Louisianans is critical during the pandemic, as such, utilities remain essential and continue operations. To ensure the safety of utility employees, CDC and CISA safety protocols have been implemented for field personnel while office employees have shifted to working remotely. Electrical utilities are currently operating under a non-disconnect order from the LPSC. Essentially, they cannot disconnect customers for non-payment and cannot charge late fees. The utilities are required to provide reliable service while experiencing a growing accounts receivable balance and lower customer demand in general.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

One of the largest vulnerabilities the Energy Sector has is the issue of demand destruction. When the Stay at Home orders began to be issued across the country the demand for refined products dropped dramatically. This created a global supply chain issue from the upstream oil and gas production of crude oil to the storage capacity for gasoline, diesel and jet fuels. While more citizens were staying home, and businesses were shutting down, the demand destruction became more prevalent. Additionally, the sector is greatly impacted by the macro environment. Oil and gas, and LNG are greatly influenced by the global marketplace. While every prediction has uncertainty, estimates range from 1-5 years of reduced demand for crude, refined products, and natural gas, therefore reducing demand for electricity and other ancillary services. The recommendations of the Energy Task force are to ensure that essential service providers can remain solvent while providing these critical products during the recovery period.

Digitalization and the growth of electrification was already a consideration for the industry. The COVID-19 crisis rapidly sped up this transition. We'll continue to see growth in this area within the energy sector in order to reduce human to human interaction and find ways to bring additional efficiencies to processes. The sector also had to develop plans for safe work environments to keep essential services available while preparing for essential workers testing positive for COVID-19. For example, widespread infection at a power plant may require a plant to be shut down and isolated, therefore making our state more susceptible to power outages.

The global energy transition may greatly impact the industry and traditional sources of revenue generation for Louisiana. While the pace of change will vary across the globe, the role Louisiana plays as an exporter of oil and gas may make it more susceptible financially to this change regardless of the pace of adoption locally. Within the state, the legal environment is a concern and makes future investment in transitioning the energy system challenging.

When looking beyond the COVID-19 crisis, potential future vulnerabilities to the Energy Sector include climate change related threats such as coastal erosion. Coastal erosion potentially threatens energy related infrastructure. Policies directed at decreasing GHG emissions also raise both economic and technological challenges. While these threats are likely to impact most areas of society, addressing the related economic and technological challenges will likely be uniquely borne by the energy sector.

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19

The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Expansion of Federal Programming:

- The need for low income support of utility customers will continue and potentially increase as the full economic impacts of this crisis become known. Federal programs should expand to address these low to moderate income residents. Expansion to and revision of LIHEAP's application, qualification, and funding provisions is recommended. Something similar for small businesses should also be explored.
- Living with COVID-19 over the medium to long-term seems more likely. For this reason, increased testing capacity for both the virus and antibodies is recommended moving forward. Increased access to testing is also recommended, such as increasing testing capacity for essential energy sector workers, as well as increasing Federally Qualified Health Centers and mobile testing units for lower-income communities.

Increase Personal Protective Equipment:

- Another virus-related need that will be long-term (not only for COVID-19 but possible future pandemics) is increased stockpiles of PPE. Industry and governments could work together to create local PPE stockpiles.

Self-Reporting/Self-Auditing:

- As we build upon the Charge 1 efforts, it would be beneficial for Louisiana to strengthen its self-reporting laws. There are 22 states in the country that have established a self-reporting framework that allows regulated organizations to conduct voluntary health, safety and environmental audits. As a society we find ourselves in a time where social distancing and a reduction in human interaction is necessary, a set of laws for self-reporting would position Louisiana to remain resilient in environmental compliance during any future emergency.

Stimulate Oil and Gas Investment in Louisiana:

- The oil and gas sector did not encounter an overall closure during the COVID-19 crisis, however, significant demand destruction in the marketplace led to scaled down production, significant revenue loss, and unfortunately reductions in employment and capital investments. In order to re-stimulate business within Louisiana, several legislative options have been proposed.
    - Eliminate, phase out or revisions of certain taxes such as the corporate franchise tax (HB 17), the payroll tax, or property taxes.
    - Address the Net Operating Loss deductions.
    - Passing of HB 19 of the 2020 1st Extraordinary Session which expands the application of the quality jobs program.
    - The Department of Revenue reduces and/or waives penalties that are involved in tax disputes.
    - Passing of the Constitutional Amendment HB 360 form the 2020 Regular Legislative Session which provides for the methodology of valuation of oil and gas wells for the purpose of ad valorem assessment.
    - Continued Support for Act 46 and any related rulemaking, including preemptive local regulation for the use of natural gas utility service. The bill provides that a parish or municipality may not deny a permit application based on the utility provider proposed to provide utility service to the project.

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Hardening of the Utility Grid:

- Continued investment in the utility grid and hardening of the system is imperative. We saw power outages during the COVID-19 pandemic from inclement weather that resulted in crews having to go out and repair distribution and transmission lines, putting people in close contact with one another. We believe hardening could prevent outages and having to send out crews for repairs. Utility companies are currently making these investments but must be supported in their recovery efforts to further allow reinvestment. Additionally, the types of hardening investment must be balanced with end user affordability. Items such as system-wide underground suggestion and other consumer cost-prohibitive items should be considered carefully against rate impacts.

Continued commitment to baseload power:

- Utilities should be supported in their continued efforts to utilize natural gas, nuclear and other affordable baseload power sources that are able to reliably serve customer needs while ensuring a lesser environmental impact than predecessor technologies. These baseload power investments allow for reliable energy sources while sustainable and newer energies are introduced and refined. Having stability in the electrical grid is important for hospitals, nursing homes, refineries and other critical businesses.

Increasing broadband access:

- Electric utilities in other states have seen success in partnerships with broadband providers. Exploration and encouragement of this type of activity for electric cooperatives, investor owned utilities and privately held utilities should be encouraged. This may be through refined legislation, incentives, etc.
- The increased broadband access is necessary to ensure work from home capabilities, on-line education, and telemedicine is reliant and available as

we continue to respond to COVID-19 and to be ready for potential future emergencies. This is especially important for the rural communities that may lag from such upgrades in more populous areas. We recommend looking further into recommendations from Charge 1 for potential opportunities for utility partnerships and third-party offerings to support increased public broadband access.

Stimulate Investment to Maximize Parish and Local Economies (SIMPLE Plan):

- Historically, Louisiana has been competitive throughout the US and the world for capital investment, though in recent years many states have made strides to raise their profile as candidates for investment. In these challenging times when companies are conserving capital just to keep their doors open, competitiveness for the little remaining investment capital matters more than ever. To maintain our competitive edge for limited investment dollars, Louisiana should consider streamlining the investment decision process to stimulate private investment. This investment will go on to support local governments desperately in need of immediate funding because of the drastic decrease in sales tax revenues and equally drastic increases in expenditures caused by the pandemic.

Affordable, reliable, sustainable and new energy technology:

- Finding ways to address and respond to the impacts of climate change (especially rising sea levels) will be a major task of ensuring a resilient Louisiana and energy sector. Investment in energy technologies such as solar, wind and other renewable technologies should be encouraged from both an economic development and fleet diversification perspective. Existing customers and new businesses considering Louisiana are requesting these solutions. Investments should be made in partnerships with utilities, which are in the best position to know customer needs when balanced with costs. Incentives for larger scale generation versus individual consumer diversification can help to avoid repetition of historic tax incentive abuse and uneven ratepayer cross-subsidization.

- Such actions will likely include both infrastructure improvements, engineered carbon capture such as Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS), and new technologies. Another component of a resilient energy sector and state are expanded and diversified energy sources. Further research and development of policies to promote offshore wind, solar and other renewable energy sources is needed. Creating regulatory clarity in this area is important.

Economic Studies:

- This task force needs to further study to better anticipate the full economic ramifications of the current crisis and the impacts on municipal utility systems. These systems are the backbone of a municipal entity, and an economic crisis could significantly affect the ability to maintain a system. Potential issues could include challenges with indebtedness at the residential and municipal levels. We have done the work for a short-term plan which will play out over 2020. The long-term plan should include periodic data collection from municipal systems to understand and plan how to address subsequent economic impacts from the COVID-19 crisis.

- To ensure we are creating a truly resilient and sustainable economy, we will need to evaluate the economic impacts in 2021 and thereafter. We will have to create a mindset of ongoing data capturing and modeling of solutions for a myriad of problems which have yet to present themselves.

Gaming

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment

The entire commercial casino gaming industry of 20 state licensed properties was closed by executive order on March 16, 2020. This resulted in the furloughing of approximately 14,000 direct employees and the cessation of gaming tax payments to the state of approximately $10,000,000 for each week the casinos remained closed as most gaming taxes are calculated against net gaming revenue. Additionally, during this time an estimated $125,000,000 in products and services normally sourced through Louisiana and other vendors were not ordered or utilized negatively affecting industry suppliers.

In addition, all video poker establishments including bars, restaurants, qualified truck stop facilities and racetracks were closed by executive order on March 16, 2020. The video poker segment operates approximately 13,000 devices at 1,400+ locations across 32 of Louisiana's Parishes. Those facilities support nearly 40,000 jobs (2% of Louisiana's workforce), contribute nearly $3.4 Billion to the state economy, and provide approximately $670 Million in total tax revenue to the state and local governments across Louisiana, nearly $200 Million of which comes directly from video poker gaming tax revenue alone. As with casinos, the shutdown affected required supplies from statewide vendors.

Also, all charitable gaming establishments (traditional halls, Video Bingo halls, and individual charitable gaming facilities) were closed by executive order on March 13, 2020. The charitable gaming segment is made up of approximately 500 organizations, conducting over 38,000 sessions per year, and contributes nearly $17 million of bona fide contributions to charitable causes. With the over two-month shutdown, the charitable contributions are estimated to be $3 million less in fiscal year 2020.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
The primary factors that made the sector more vulnerable to disruption

As a public entertainment industry, the commercial casinos and video poker establishments were most vulnerable to this form of disruption due to the necessity of a high degree of personal interaction with customers. Initial closure orders and subsequent Phase 1-3 orders which restrict capacity or public access directly relate to lost revenue, tax payments, procurement and employment.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19

The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Most important strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen

Legalization of commercial gaming was implemented in 1992 with the first video poker establishments licensed in the same year and riverboat casinos opening in late 1993. For the next 26 years until 2018 there were no significant legislative updates to the industry's regulatory or operational structure. This prohibited its ability to effectively compete with other jurisdictions as they began offering similar gaming options and also limited the industry's ability to leverage new technologies to maximize efficiency. As reliant upon the casino gaming industry's roughly $600M in direct annual gaming tax revenue as the state is, it would seem prudent to review the state of the industry with an eye towards competitive modernization more than once per quarter century.

The same sentiment applies to the video poker industry. The state is heavily reliant on the revenue generated by this industry and allowing for competitive marketplace improvements would only increase the $200M in revenue the state receives from the video gaming tax revenue alone. Regulation of Charitable Gaming in the State of Louisiana dates back to the middle of 1980's and is governed by the Louisiana Laws and Regulations set by the State Legislation. The Office of Charitable Gaming is funded entirely through self-generated funds.

The following proposals adopted as recommendations by the Gaming Task Force are detailed in the table below as being relevant to the current COVID-19 environment to foster recovery and strengthen the industry for future challenges:

1. Favorable tax treatment of promotional play offers
2. Authorization of sports wagering
3. Authorization of iGaming
4. Improve regulatory staffing for statutorily mandated taskings
5. Reduce the dependency of personal interaction with respect to forms of wagering
6. Protect the industry from meritless tort claims from staff and customers
7. Allow the industry to participate in tax credits, deferrals and offsets similar to those extended to any other large-scale employer in the state

The following are proposals presented by the video poker industry to the Gaming Task Force and adopted by same as a means to boost recovery and prepare the industry for future challenges:

1. Revise the definition of video draw poker
2. Limited number of video gaming devices in the marketplace
3. Allow for specific progressive jackpots
4. Allow for player tracking and free play/favorable tax treatment of promotional play
5. Authorization of sports wagering
6. Consideration of tax credits/tax deferrals or re-aligning the video poker taxes to be in line with other forms of gaming
7. Elimination of minimum fuel requirements for qualified truck stop facilities that have been licensed for ten or more years

The following are proposals presented by the Charitable Gaming industry to the gaming task force:

1. Authorization I-gaming to players
2. Authorization Electronic Video Pull Tab devices
3. Revise Laws for Statewide Progressive Bingo games
4. Revise Laws for Electronic Video Bingo devices

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Implement favorable tax treatment of pro-motional play offers. Casinos issue promotional credit or “free play” offers to existing or prospective customers through coupons, email and other means of distribution. These non-cash offers when redeemed by customers are treated as actual income and are taxed at 21.5% even though this is not revenue.	Legislature, gaming regulators	Allow for the deduction from net gaming revenue the amount attributable to the issuance of promotional or “free play” offers to customers.	As detailed in the 2018 Riverboat Economic Development & Gaming Task Force, promotional credits are the most effective marketing tool available to operators. Only six out of twenty-eight other states tax 100% of the promotional credits issued by casino operators. Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana Native American casinos aren’t taxed at all on promotional credits. By foregoing the current tax on these non-cash instruments according to a study of actual utilization of free play credits in Louisiana conducted by Spectrum Gaming Research the state would increase its overall gaming tax collections some $11M through increased new wagers being subject to the standard gaming tax rate.
2.	Authorization of sports wagering	Legislature, gaming regulators	Allow for the authorization of sports wagering at the 20 commercial casinos and statewide via mobile devices. A statewide referendum election will be held putting the issue before voters on Nov. 3, 2020. Additional future legislative authorization is required setting forth a sustainable tax rate, gaming format and regulatory structure	22 other states have approved sports wagering with another 16 states actively considering it following the overturning of the federal prohibition two years ago. Mississippi has offered this form of wagering now for two years. New Jersey particularly since the virus onset has benefited from revenue from its mobile platforms as they were not impacted by casino shut downs.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
3.	Authorization of iGaming. iGaming is and will continue to be of inter-est as player age demographics change. Traditional forms of gaming will need to adapt and respond to player demand. iGaming may be conducted even when brick-and-mortar casinos are closed for viruses, hurricanes or other disasters.	Legislature, gaming regulators	Allow for the authorization of iGaming through platforms offered by the 20 commercial casinos using statewide mobile devices	New Jersey particularly since the virus onset has benefitted from revenue from its mobile platforms as they were not impacted by casino shut downs. iGaming exposes players to brick-and-mortar brands without cannibalization as shown by New Jersey's experience. Beginning operations in late 2013 New Jersey has since collected $282M in iGaming tax revenue and seen continued growth in online operations, especially during the virus shut down period. During April 2020 the state received $12M in online gaming tax revenue with overall revenues increasing 118% from the prior year. Pennsylvania received $17M during the same period from online gaming. From a resiliency planning standpoint, as well as the necessary continued modernization of gaming offerings, iGaming will become a staple of the industry and an expectation of customers. New Jersey Internet Gaming Revenue: • April 2020: $80 million (118.6% increase) • April 2019: $36.6 million • Year-to-Date ending April 2020: $25.9 million (78.5% increase) • Year-to-Date ending April 2019: $141 million *https://www.nj.gov/oag/ge/docs/Financials/PressRel2020/April2020.pdf*
4.	Insufficient regulatory staffing for outdated tasking. Gaming statutes and thus regulatory policy have not kept pace with automation and require labor intensive participation from both regulators and industry	Legislature, gaming regulators	1. Return to core regulatory requirements of ensuring games are conducted fairly, taxes are collected and corruptive elements are excluded.	1. Present regulatory policy requires that many tasks have the physical presence of a Division agent. However, there are insufficient numbers of Division personnel available to support the commercial demand in a timely manner. Accordingly, casinos must pay third-party inspectors or have games sitting idle awaiting a Division agent before the game can be placed in service. In many other gaming jurisdictions this is not required and instead regulators ensure compliance through automated systems and spot audits.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
			2. Update Louisiana State Police Gaming Division IT services to allow online report submissions and consolidation of reporting requirements eliminating duplication and reducing the potential for human error	2. Additionally LSP continues to operate legacy IT platforms that are incapable of being upgraded and do not even interface with other Division platforms requiring duplicative data entries which increases the chance for error
5.	Current wagering restrictions require personal contact and the shared touching of currency and other instruments	Legislature, gaming regulators	Authorize cashless wagering though account established at the casino to include screening for compulsive gambling and state exclusion list	Personal interaction in times of communicable diseases would be greatly reduced. Furthermore, as players would have to establish accounts at the casino, more data will be available to combat unauthorized gaming (compulsive gaming, state excluded etc.)
5.	Current wagering restrictions require personal contact and the shared touching of currency and other instruments	Legislature, gaming regulators	Authorize cashless wagering though account established at the casino to include screening for compulsive gambling and state exclusion list	Personal interaction in times of communicable diseases would be greatly reduced. Furthermore, as players would have to establish accounts at the casino, more data will be available to combat unauthorized gaming (compulsive gaming, state excluded etc.)
6.	As both large-scale employers and public venues, casinos are prime targets for meritless litigation relative to the alleged exposure of employees or the general public to communicable diseases at the facility	Legislature	Implement tort claim protection for entities that are following best available public health guidelines.	Both a national and state level issue, as employers reopen facilities there needs to be reasonable immunity from specious litigation in those situations where the venue is implementing best practices based on government guidelines

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
7.	Industry participation in tax offset, waiver and deferral programs	Legislature	1. Employees - casino industry participation in tax credits for employee retention/ re-hire pro-grams are essential due to the total cessation of revenue during casino closures. Additionally, tax credits for the hiring and/or training of employees specifically to address threats during a declared emergency such as sanitization staff or those required for physical plant security. 2. Capital Investment - allow casinos to participate like any other large-scale employer in tax incentives for capital investment.	1. The concepts behind Recommendation 1 are self-explanatory. 2. With the complete closure of the industry resulting in zero revenue, 14,000 employees had to be furloughed. No industry budgets for this nor can sustain payrolls without income. As the reason for industry's existence in the first place is economic development the ability to have the short-term cash re-sources and longer term favorable tax treatment to reemploy this work-force is essential. Additionally, with respect to Recommendation 2, it must be noted that casinos are operated by regional and national parent corporations. They in turn must respond to the expectation of shareholders to maximize the return on investment. Accordingly, casinos "compete" even with-in their own parent corporation for new dollars for new projects or rein-vestment capital for existing facilities. Louisiana is already at a disadvantage in return on in-vestment comparisons with other gaming jurisdictions in that the state gaming tax rate is 21.5% of net gaming revenue while in Mississippi for example it is 8%. Furthermore, Louisiana casinos have been excluded from all tax favored programs since the inception of gaming in 1993 (Quality Jobs Pro-gram, Go-Zone, ITEP etc.) By continuing this practice of exclusion, the state makes the argument for the private sector's expenditure of capital at new or existing facilities nearly impossible when higher returns can be obtained elsewhere.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
8.	The video poker segment is restricted by the current definition of video draw poker. By allowing the segment to provide a larger variety of poker games, this can turn the declining interest in playing video poker into a growth trend with positive economic benefit to the state.	Legislature, Gaming regulators	Revise the definition of video draw poker to be more than dealing five cards and drawing five cards. Allow for such games as: 3 card poker, 5 card stud, 7 card stud, the ability to define winning hands from any single card or combination of cards, and multi-hand poker. This proposal would not include a change in max bet or max jackpot.	The video poker industry provides a generous revenue stream to the state. However, the video poker industry in Louisiana is in a decline. By adding a broader range of video poker games, removing the limitations of a standard five card stud game, removing the terms "deal" and "draw" and the number of cards utilized, this will allow for the segment to also generate new ways to gamble and ultimately allow us to appeal to a broader customer base. By broadening our appeal with more poker content, as an industry we can increase our tax base.
9.	Limited number of devices in the marketplace	Legislature, Gaming regulators	Increase the max number of devices allowed at video poker establishments, including bars, restaurants, and truck stops.	There are locations and markets in Louisiana today that could benefit from additional supply during peak times. With the addition of new video draw poker products and a broader customer base, the operators and the state can grow their revenues. An increase in the number of devices at establishments will add new tax revenue to the state. This will also increase the revenues the state realizes from licensing fees. It may likewise cause for the hiring of additional employees and many locations may wish to expand their establishments, which in turn, will provide new construction employment and investment in the state's economy. For example, a bar or restaurant may be able to increase to five devices and a truck stop to sixty-five devices. In order to accommodate the additional devices, an establishment may need to expand their footprint.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
10.	In-house Progressives	Legislature, Gaming regulators	Allow for property specific progressive jackpots based on the play of a game(s) with a limit of $10,000.	This prize would generate additional interest in our locations and be of great benefit to the video poker industry and the state. An increased jackpot based on the play of the game will encourage play, increasing the tax revenue received by the state. The jackpot would increase by a small predetermined amount each time the game is played and the jackpot is not won. Once the jackpot is won, the game will reset and resume the incremental increase. This can be accomplished in a single game or within a single truck stop or restaurant/bar where multiple devices are linked together at the option of the operator. Progressives could also be linked be-tween establishments. We believe the new central system is capable of accommodating progressives.
11.	Player Tracking / Free Play	Legislature, Gaming regulators	Allow for player tracking and free play credits to be downloaded to devices.	While the practice of player tracking is not prohibited in the video poker segment, downloading credits to the machine is prohibited. Allowing player tracking encourages play and increases revenue to the industry and the state. Under the current climate, this allows for less contact with the guests and reduces the industry's expenses, while encouraging play. Player tracking allows an establishment to allocate promotions more efficiently and reward players regularly. Greater rewards received by players inspires additional play, and as stated throughout, additional play creates additional revenue for the state. In conjunction with the casino request that FREE Play not be taxed, we would request the same treatment.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
12.	Authorization of Sports Betting	Legislature, Gaming regulators	Allow video poker establishments to be included in statewide sports wagering.	While it makes perfect sense for the commercial casinos to offer legalized sports wagering, it also makes perfect sense for the state to maximize its revenue potential by the utilization of over 1,600 outlets throughout the state. This will create a significant competitive advantage for the state due to the substantial increase in safe regulated access for sports bet-ting patrons, which will allow the state to convert illegal wagering activity into taxable legal wagering revenue. We expect that our customer profiles and economic structure will be different, nonetheless, video poker gaming out-lets should be included in statewide sports wagering.
13.	Due to the loss of revenue during the recovery period, consider tax credits, tax deferrals, and/or re-aligning video poker taxes to be in line with other gaming taxes in Louisiana.	Legislature, Gaming regulators	Re-align the various video poker tax rates to comparable rates of the other types of gaming within the state. Allow for tax relief due to the burden brought on by the current and/or potentially future pandemics. Provide credit for the rehire of employees due to the state of emergency for training specific to protocols for sanitizing and protecting the facilities. Provide for tax incentives for operator expenditures currently or in the future from the virus for such things as social distancing partitions, new slot bases, and modifications to points of entry.	Current tax rates in the Louisiana Gaming industry are as follows: • Riverboat: 21.5% • Racetrack: 18.5 • Off Track Betting Parlors: 18.5% • Video Poker three machine location: 26% • Qualified Truck Stop Facility: 32.5% Video poker is taxed higher than any other gaming industry in the state. The majority of video poker establishments are owned and operated by state residents. Any of these tax incentives would give these state residents additional revenues to hire more people, reinvest in their facilities, and purchase new equipment. Any enhancement to the current tax structure will provide additional revenues to a video poker establishment's operation, thereby having a simultaneous beneficial effect to the state.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
14.	Business/ Operational Matters	Legislature, Gaming regulators	• For truck stop locations that have been operating for ten or more years under the established guidelines, eliminate the requirements for fuel minimums while keeping fuel as a required offering. • Eliminate the requirement for restaurants to operate 12 hours per day.	Both of these would decrease the amount of regulatory oversight required by the video gaming division. The elimination of fuel sale requirements would eradicate a tremendous amount of paperwork for the industry and the division. Eliminating the fuel sales will not lower the barrier of entry, but will reduce the demand on regulator resources. Restaurant hours of operation should be a decision left to the operator based on business levels. The restaurants with fifty seats and a varied menu would still be a requirement, but operators would determine hours of operations and ultimately the ability to optimize profitability under the guidelines. In both of these cases, the requirement to offer them remains, but operators are allowed to market the offerings in a way that optimizes profits.
15.	Charitable Gaming operations	Legislation	Authorize Internet Gaming at charitable gaming facilities	I-gaming has become popular with players and could be an additional source for state revenues and help increase players' opportunities. I-gaming would help eliminate the concept of only offering live bingo games where all players are confined with a bingo hall.
16.	Establish Electronic Video Pull tabs	Legislation changes	Currently Electronic Video Pull tabs are not established	Similar to casinos, I-gaming has become a staple in the industry and an expectation of customers. Offering Electronic Video Pull tabs standalone devices similar to slots and Electronic Video Bingo machines could create a new player market for charitable gaming.
17.	Charitable Gaming operations	Legislation changes	Currently, Statewide Electronic Progressive games are allowed but are limited	Relaxing limitations could increase interest and create additional state funds. Current limitations are no more than 6 call games per hour and $10,000 jackpots. Also, currently limited to traditional halls only.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
18.	Charitable gaming operations	Legislation changes	Video Bingo Devices are allowed but are limited	Currently, only allowed approximately 1,200 devices statewide and 35 devices per location. Law only allows $1 bet with a maximum $1,000 win. Allowing unlimited devices, an increase of the number of devices per location, $2 bet, and ticket in/ ticket out devices could increase players interest as well as additional state funds

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

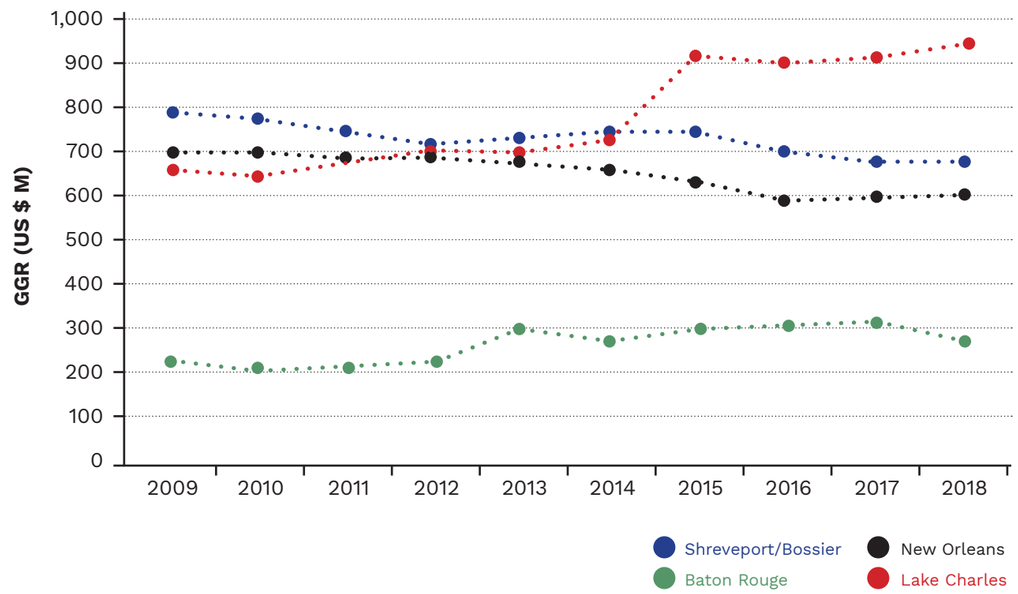
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Most important strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future

It will be noted that the pre-and post-COVID-19 issues are largely duplicative. This reflects that both the short term and long-term issues facing this private sector industry are immediately addressable and primarily economic in nature deriving from the lack of evolution of state gaming policy.

Louisiana was the last state to allow the riverboat gaming platforms of the early 1990s to move ashore despite significant exposure to hurricanes as highlighted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Eight of the fourteen operating riverboats were out of service, some for year, due to storm damage. This resulted in staff out of work and an interruption of tax revenue. Other examples of a lack of planned evolutionary gaming policy include that despite being permanently dockside since 2001, the riverboats were required to maintain functional paddle-wheels for another 17 years and to this day must still maintain marine crews. Lastly in the years since the U.S. Supreme Court overturn of the federal ban on sports wagering 22 other states including Mississippi have implemented it with over a dozen more considering it. Only this fall will Louisiana voters even have the potential to express their desire to have a legal version of this form of wagering available in the state.

The above examples represent unnecessary costs to the operators. However, the real cost of not allowing the casino gaming industry to evolve to address changing player demands through new game offerings or embracing new efficient technologies is the cost the state bears in the form of lost gaming tax revenue. As shown in the graph below with the single exception of the addition of a new riverboat casino in Lake Charles, gaming revenue and by extension, state gaming tax revenue has been flat or in a slight decline for a decade.

Direct casino state gaming tax revenue for FY 2018-19 was $517,666,368 and does not include all of the other conventional commercial enterprise taxes the casinos additionally pay. This figure was a significant contribution to the overall state general fund revenue of $8,601,300,000 for the same period. Furthermore, despite the flattening of revenue over the last decade, casino gaming tax receipts by the state have been far more stable than the vagaries of oil & gas tax revenues.



Source: Louisiana Gaming Control Board

As with casinos, the issues remain the same pre and post COVID-19 for the video gaming industry. And, as with casinos, the video poker industry issues are primarily economic in nature and require a statutory revision for implementation.

The progression of the Louisiana video poker industry has been stagnant since its inception. Every attempt to increase revenue from a business standpoint and create opportunities has been stifled. This in turn has led to decreased revenues to the industry and the state.

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment
Questions to consider:
What is the status of the sector (e.g., unemployment, status of business operations)?
Per Phase 2 requirements commercial casinos as of the time of this writing are operating at 50% of their rated occupancy and 75% of the gaming positions available to enforce social distancing. Employment levels are reduced both to reduced customer demand and the necessity of operating within sustainable expense limits due to uncertain future revenues.

The video poker industry is in the same status as the casinos as far as operations are concerned. They are operating at 50% of their occupancy and 75% of the gaming devices. Employment levels are near pre-COVID-19 levels and customer demand has been steady.

How quickly will the sector recover in the future (if no new strategies are implemented)?
Recovery without new strategies is obviously difficult to predict in this unprecedented environment and highly dependent upon customer actions. It is expected that regional gaming markets will recover more quickly than destination markets which rely heavily on-air travel.
Even though customer demand has been steady, the recovery process will be long since the shutdown lasted several months and the majority of the truck stop establishments retained their employees during the closure.

Are the impacts to the sector different across the state?
Mindful that casinos have just resumed limited operations and revenue figures for the first partial month are not yet available anecdotal information from the property level indicates a fairly uniform customer volume response across the state. In the video poker industry, the impacts have been uniformed across the state.

Are there concerns/issues that are unique to this sector?
This industry sector concerns are closely aligned with those of restaurants, tourism and entertainment, all of which are heavily reliant upon the willingness of the public to venture out even in a post-COVID-19 environment. However, unlike the other entertainment sectors noted above casino gaming does have one unique concern that being the heavily regulated environment it must operate in. A restaurant is free to add more seating capacity and change its menu items based on customer trends. State licensed casino gaming however remains limited in both its location, format, size and product/game offering.

The video poker industry is obviously reliant on the ability of individuals to frequent their establishments such as bars, restaurants and truck stop facilities. Like casinos, the video poker industry has not been permitted to keep up with customer demand due to the constraints put into law in 1992. None noted beyond those previously stated are apparent at the time of this writing.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
Factors that made the sector most vulnerable to the impacts identified in the previous section.

Questions to consider:
What underlying, systemic concerns made members of the sector particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19? (Examples include: supply chain issues, inability to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and spending, outdated technologies, overly reliant on a single sales channel, overly leveraged, lack of working capital and inability to adapt to government-imposed restrictions)
As noted above in the context of a communicable disease, customer willingness to return to normal entertainment options places this sector at the greatest risk. However, this is not the only factor. During the 2019 Dept. of Public Safety IT ransomware incident it was highlighted that the outdated and under capable software platforms with which the gaming regulators are handicapped to conduct gaming employee permit applications were vulnerable. This resulted in delayed processing times and was only mitigated through the flexibility of the Gaming Division in implementing on-the-fly changes to keep the process moving. This incident affected the video gaming industry as well in regards to processing applications, both for establishments and individuals. Likewise, the ability of the customer to visit a facility and the willingness of the customer also apply to video gaming.

In what ways were members of the sector best able to successfully adapt or pivot their operations in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19? (Examples include remote-work capabilities, online transactions). As current state gaming law mandates wagers, be placed in person and the gaming facilities were closed there was no remote-work option. However once limited reopening was allowed the casinos could scale a portion of their operations (only opening some restaurants/retail spaces) as well as limited staff call-backs to appropriately size their operation to the current customer demand.

The video poker industry is also limited to in-person transactions. Once the state entered Phase 1 and continued through Phase 2, the industry implemented extra precautions such as social distancing through markings in the gaming areas, device distancing, use of plastic barriers between devices, and reduced employee/patron contact; temperature checks of patrons and employees; and enhanced cleaning protocols.

What are opportunities to improve sector capabilities beyond the COVID-19 pandemic?
As detailed in the tables above the largest single factor for improving the future resiliency of this sector is to allow the evolution of the industry to meet changing customer demands. New game offerings, flexibility in sizing and formats and the incorporations of new and emerging technology to automate reporting and auditing requirements are all needed.

Are there shortcomings or threats unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic that could destabilize or hinder growth in the sector? For instance, to what extent is your sector prepared for the world-wide economic challenge of mass displacement of jobs due to new technologies (e.g., automation and artificial intelligence), environment disaster, increasing socio-political tension from entrenched poverty, changing global economic patterns or potential future pandemics?
The casino gaming industry is sensitive to customer discretionary spending habits. Factors outside the current pandemic such as weather (hurricanes/flooding), local, regional or national economy downturns (2008 national recession or localized job losses from other large-scale employers such as oil & gas) or civil protests all have a chilling effect on customer willingness to spend discretionary funds.

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen

Questions to consider:
What protocols and policies should be used to ensure safety of workers and customers (assuming we have moved to Phase 2)?
Following guidance from the Center for Disease Control as well as state and local health care officials and with Executive branch approval the Gaming Task Force crafted a reopening proposal for the gaming industry which was implemented. These are currently in effect and include but are not limited to customer and staff temperature screening, written and verbal health-challenge questions at points of entry, hand sanitizing stations, employee mask wear with customers encouraged to wear masks, a reduction to 50% of rated customer capacity, 75% of rated number of gaming positions and the maintenance of social distancing through either physical space or partitions between gaming positions.

What are some short-term strategies that can be implemented to help accelerate the recovery of the sector?
As detailed in the tables above, allowing the industry to evolve to meet customer demands, allowing industry participation in any favored tax programs including offsets, waivers, credits or deferrals for income, capital investment and employee retention.

What are threats that may hinder or thwart recovery?
Anything which dampens customer interest in returning to normal entertainment options including but not limited to a resurgence in virus cases.

How will your recommendations prioritize vulnerable people and their jobs so we recover better than we entered this pandemic?
Since its inception, the casino gaming industry has had the statutory tasking of ensuring inclusion of Louisiana residents and minorities with respect to employment while providing maximum advancement opportunities. To that end the industry has set voluntary goals for employment which track U.S. Census demographic data. The net result is that the industry's past, current and future employment practices already exceed the percentage of representation of the

base data. The recommendations above will allow a viable gaming industry to continue this effort.

How will your recommendations seek to eliminate the continuing impact of past and current discrimination?
It is the past and current practice of the industry to provide internal paths for promotion as well as recruiting from outside the industry when appropriate, all based on the merit and potential of the individual. Each casino gaming licensee additionally has an on-site Human Resources department responsible for adherence to all federal and state requirements. That said it is believed that for the private sector the best manner of addressing the impact of past and current discrimination is to provide stable employment opportunities with real paths for advancement so that the individual can attain a level of economic freedom allowing them to impact their own destiny. Corporate parent entities also have engaged diversity programs which work with representatives from each property to identify recruit prospects and to advance the careers of minority and female staff members.

How will your recommendations ensure that ZIP codes don't predict health and economic outcomes?
Casino employment practices do not consider ZIP codes for any purpose and thus there is no potential for negative effect with regard to health and economic outcomes. However nearly all casino gaming companies created in-house relief funds for employees to assist during the pandemic with immediate financial needs.

How will your recommendations create more ladders of opportunity so that Louisiana becomes a stronger, more prosperous and resilient state?
At present approximately 65% of our workforce are minorities and 55% are female. With respect to the most recently available census information these figures already exceed the base demographic data. However, the industry additionally tasks itself with the advancement of these groups through training and promotion though in some cases this may be affected by the individual's willingness to relocate to a sister property for a new position.

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient in the future.

Questions to consider:
What ways could CARES Act funds be used to strengthen the sector (e.g., workforce training)?
The casino gaming industry was excluded in the employer portion of the CARES Act despite having otherwise qualifying facilities.
What strategies and policies could better position the sector for the future and what are the ideas for implementation?
Allow the casino gaming industry to evolve in response to customer demand

(new games, formats etc.) and allow the incorporation of newer technologies (casino game and finance management and reporting software platforms) for greater efficiency.

Are there opportunities for this sector to build greater equity, internally or for the state as a whole?
Yes, as set forth in the responses tabulated below.

Are there opportunities to foster more entrepreneurship and innovation in the sector?
Being a private sector entity, this industry is best positioned to foster entrepreneurship by directly engaging in commerce with vendors. To that end, the identification of prospective vendors is of great importance. State programs either directly supporting the upscaling of smaller vendors to meet the capacity needs of casinos or at least providing the framework for private sector capital access to such vendors can help them grow and service the needs of the gaming industry. Removing current state gaming policy restrictions will foster innovation. As a point of reference, the bulk of the gaming statutes and therefore gaming policy were implemented 15 years before the invention of the iPhone.

Are there additional opportunities for innovation or improvements that will better position the sector?
None apparent at the time of this writing beyond what has been detailed above.
How will your recommendations prioritize vulnerable people and their jobs so we recover better than we entered this pandemic?
Since its inception, the casino gaming industry has had the statutory tasking of ensuring inclusion of Louisiana residents and minorities with respect to employment while providing maximum advancement opportunities. To that end the industry has set voluntary goals for employment which track U.S. Census demographic data. The net result is that the industry's past, current and future employment practices already exceed the percentage of representation of the base data. The recommendations above will allow a viable gaming industry to continue this effort.

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How will your recommendations ensure that ZIP codes don't predict health and economic outcomes? Casino employment practices do not consider ZIP codes for any purpose and thus there is no potential for negative effect with regard to health and economic outcomes.

How will your recommendations create more ladders of opportunity so that Louisiana becomes a stronger, more prosperous and resilient state?
At present approximately 65% of our workforce are minorities and 55% are female. With respect to the most recently available census information these figures already exceed the base demographic data. However, the industry additionally tasks itself with the advancement of these groups through training and promotion though in some cases this may be affected by the individual's willingness to relocate to a sister property.

Healthcare & Human Services

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS
1A. Sector Impact Assessment

Despite smoldering for an undetermined amount of time, the coronavirus surfaced in the state of Louisiana on the heels of Mardi Gras 2020. Guided by science and grounded in the proven principles that have been deployed in the face of past catastrophes, facilities large and small, urban and rural, marshalled together the needed resources to face the ever-evolving challenges presented by COVID-19. The incredible work of healthcare professionals and essential workers in responding to this unseen threat was extraordinary and awe-inspiring. Though the state is beyond the peak of the pandemic and all trends are favorable, hundreds of patients remain hospitalized and the threat of a potential return in the fall is a stark reality.

The American Hospital Association estimates that hospitals across the United States have lost $202.6 billion. Unprecedented losses in hospitals and health systems in Louisiana are included in that estimate. During the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals across the state experienced a decrease in profitable surgical business and saw an increase in costs related to personal protective equipment, laboratory supplies, pharmaceuticals, and additional staff. Highly profitable surgery centers were closed for 10-12 weeks and ambulatory visits were converted to less profitable virtual visits. Additionally, nursing homes and other congregate living facilities have been particularly hard hit by the coronavirus. As of June 10, 2020, 44,472 cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Louisiana, resulting in 2,874 deaths. 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 the deaths were African American.

The pandemic dealt a significant blow to nursing facilities, which provide much-needed medical services to our state's frail and elderly population. These facilities also make an enormous economic impact on our state's bottom line, including millions of dollars in employment income, and state and local taxes.
Surgical cases resumed after April 20, 2020, prior to Louisiana transitioning to Phase 1. However, healthcare providers have documented cases of patients delaying care because of the fear of coronavirus. The Louisiana Emergency Response Network (LERN), noted a surprising decrease in time- sensitive illnesses, i.e., strokes and heart attacks. Hospitals remain concerned about consumer confidence.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

The socio-economic status of Louisiana, ranked 50th in the nation by U.S. News, has made the healthcare sector more vulnerable to disruption by COVID-19. The outcome of this ranking and the seven vectors that comprise it are high chronic disease rates, high rates of under- and uninsured citizens, and a high rate of Medicaid enrollment (1.5 million of the state's population of 4.5 million, as of February 2020). The reality is that these outcomes are directly correlated to the social determinants of health; educational, economic and opportunity voids, food insecurity, physical environment, social isolation and access to healthcare, each of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

State of the Healthcare Industry in Louisiana

The 2013 U.S. Census breaks down Louisiana's population of 4,625,470 residents as follows:

- 0 - 18 years of age = 24%
- 18-64 years of age = 64%
- 65 years + = 13%
- Females = 51%
- Males = 49%
- Whites = 63%
- Black/African American = 32%
- All other races = 5%

Approximately, 19% of the population is below the federal poverty level and 79% of individuals over the age of 25 have graduated from high school, compared to 85% nationally. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015 report showed an unemployment rate at 6.4%. Source: Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI)

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19

The healthcare task force has identified four major areas of focus to address the recovery from COVID-19 and improve the status of health to the citizens of Louisiana: transforming health outcomes, Medicaid payment reform, workforce stabilization and development, and rural hospital preservation.

Transforming Health Outcomes

In 2017, seven of the top 10 leading causes of death in Louisiana were attributed to chronic disease. These conditions also disproportionately impacted minority populations across Louisiana, with COVID-19 outcomes expected to mirror Louisiana's chronic disease rate. A significant impact of COVID-19 is that the virus and associated response further dislocated Louisiana citizens from vital healthcare services. This was immediately concerning for Louisiana as the virus demonstrated early on that it disproportionately caused death among individuals with one or more chronic conditions. Additionally, while virtual medicine filled the demand for access to care during the height of the coronavirus, health systems reported a significant decline in virtual appointments in recent weeks.

According to the CDC, Louisiana's chronic disease incidence and morbidity profiles are among the worst in the U.S.:

- Kidney Disease – 2nd highest in the U.S.
- Heart Disease – 5th highest in the U.S.
- Stroke – 3rd highest in the U.S.
- Cancer – 5th highest in the U.S.
- Alzheimer's – 7th highest in the U.S.
- Diabetes – 14th highest in the U.S.
- Chronic Respiratory Disease – 19th highest in the U.S.

The healthcare task force fully endorses the Governor's COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force. Louisiana must address socio-economic factors causing disparities in health outcomes. It is imperative that both transparency and accountability for outcomes flow to a broad spectrum of providers and insurers.

Workforce Stabilization and Development

More than half of Louisiana's parishes are designated as geographic health professional shortage areas for primary care (56%), dental care (56%), and mental healthcare (81%). This is compared to only 37% of U.S. counties for primary care, 19% of U.S. counties for dental care, and 67% of U.S. counties for mental healthcare.

Nursing education capacity has surfaced as a workforce vulnerability. On a positive note, the number of graduates from Louisiana's pre-RN licensure programs increased by 7%, which is a notable increase when compared to the less than 1% increase in 2017-2018. The passage rate on the NCLEX-RN Exam on the first take for Louisiana candidates in 2019 was 94.72%, which exceeded the 88.18% national passage rate.

However, approximately 31% (1,499) of qualified applicants were denied admission to Louisiana's pre-RN licensure programs in 2018-2019, compared to 1,393 in 2017-2018, which represents an 8% increase in number. Contributing factors included:

- Non-competitive faculty salary, together with insufficient budgeted faculty positions
- Lack of qualified faculty and lack of classroom space ranked Nos. 2 and 3, respectively
- Unavailable clinical specialty, lack of clinical space and skills lab space, all of which are in alignment with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (AACN, 2019) report on 2018-2019 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing

Source: Nursing Education Capacity in Louisiana 2019, Louisiana State Board of Nursing Center for Nursing

Medicaid Payment Reform
Louisiana's Medicaid expansion program provides safety-net care to 1.5 million Louisiana residents in need. We expect those numbers to significantly increase as unemployment rates continue to rise. As coverage increases, so will the need to improve the sustainability of primary care and enhance the overall effectiveness of the Louisiana healthcare delivery to Medicaid recipients. Challenges include provider shortages for primary care and specialty care; healthcare literacy; and patients with complex health issues. Considerations should be given to foster greater innovation in both payment reform and other aspects of care delivery by institutionalizing a cross-sector forum for all stakeholders in Louisiana's healthcare sector.

Rural Hospital Preservation
Louisiana's rural hospital system has faced staffing shortages, insufficient resources and financial hardship in the wake of the pandemic. The state's 50 small rural hospitals (60 beds or less), provide critical access to residents in parishes with populations of 65,000 or less. These facilities have experienced a 40% drop in revenue, which amounts to a $400,000,000 payroll effect and economic multiplier of $2.4 billion.

In order to maintain the principles of the Rural Hospital Preservation Act, the healthcare task force recommends stabilized supplemental payments, higher reimbursement levels, expanded tele-medicine access, transportation services, high-speed internet services, grant funding and tax relief programs.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	COVID-19 Response-Testing	LDH	Program/Funding	Continue to expand available testing with 24-hour test results for healthcare workers and patients/residents Expand testing capacity with rapid results for the public to ensure rapid, widespread testing in the event of a resurgence in COVID-19 Expand testing of high-risk populations (e.g. nursing home residents) Provide robust contract tracing capacity to fol-low up on positive patients Provide clear guidelines for employers on testing in the workplace, drawing on CDC guide-lines. These guidelines include testing workers in high-risk roles (e.g. nursing home workers) Create a statewide surveillance testing pro-gram to understand prevalence in different communities and populations

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
2.	COVID-19 Response Reimbursement	LDH	Program/Funding	Maintain the COVID-19 daily reimbursement rate for as long as possible Continue to fund the CMS-approved Medicaid reimbursement methodology for nursing facilities
3.	COVID-19 Response Personal Protective Equipment	LDH	Program/Funding	Provide PPE until nor-mal supply chain is re-stored
4.	COVID-19 Response Access to Care	Legislature	Policy/legislation	Prioritize high-speed internet and cellular telephone services in areas served by RHPAHs
5.	COVID-19 Response Workforce	LDH	Policy	Maintain current regulations that permits the use of non-licensed personnel (nursing assistants) who have been deemed clinically competent in the clinical skill for which they have been trained
6.	Transforming Health Outcomes	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Consider establishing an advisory panel to define a comprehensive universal chronic disease data set in ambulatory, inpatient and post-acute settings. Additionally, Require employers to provide universal data to insurers to allow for the aggregation of data and reporting of outcomes. Continue to mandate data collection on factors correlated with COVID-19 outcomes, such as race, gender, age, and ethnicity as people receive care.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
7.	Transforming Health Outcomes	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Continue to fund TACL through the existing LDH cooperative endeavor agreement. Challenge TACL Board of Directors to pick two specific outcome-oriented vectors (i.e., one related to TACL's existing colon cancer initiative and another related to the group's breast cancer initiative). TACL could test a program similar to the legacy breast and cervical cancer program long supported by LDH, which provides vital funding that incentivizes providers to conduct prevention, detection and early diagnosis programs; anyone diagnosed with breast cancer is then fast-tracked to Medicaid enrollment if they are uninsured. As TACL initiatives develop, the model could be replicated for hypertension, heart disease and diabetes and follow along with synergistic payor, provider, public and private strategies
8.	Transforming Health Outcomes	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Invest in public-private collaborations that establish accountability measures and track outcomes (i.e., Taking Aim at Cancer in Louisiana, or TACL).
9.	Transforming Health Outcomes	LDH	Program/Funding	Develop a partnership that focuses on chronic diseases initiatives, using the TACL model as an available avenue for investment: Expand chronic primary prevention, education and early detection through tele-health and integration with community-based health centers, congregate care settings, FQHCs, etc. Spur innovation among providers and payers (both commercial and government).
10.	Transforming Health Outcomes	LDH	Program/Funding	Establish avenues for payors and providers that include accountability measures and associated incentives addressing chronic disease incidence and management. Increase MCOs investment in improving SDOH; food, housing, transportation

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
11.	Transforming Health Outcomes	LDH	Program/Funding	Leverage the existing biomedical infrastructure to develop a cross-sector forum of Louisiana-based academic institutions to allow for better studies on what is causing healthcare disparities and poor outcomes, as well as what works.
12.	Transforming Health Outcomes	Legislature	Policy/Legislation	Expand access to care in rural, tribal and areas of poverty, increase the supply of APRNs in the state and expand Medicaid recipients' access to care by permanently removing scope of practice barriers for nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists and certified nurse midwives
13.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Vocational training facilities, community colleges, colleges, and universities	Program/Funding	Provide funding for higher education institutions and/or healthcare provider systems that implement workforce development programs solely or in partnership with higher education institutions Offer retraining opportunities for displaced workers Tie workforce grants to growing the job base Determine grant re-payment penalties for facilities if they fail to meet the benchmark for retrained workers Offer tuition assistance for students in all nurs-ing educational pro-grams (including, but not limited to, BSN, MSN, APRN and CNA programs)
14.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Schools of nursing, vocational nursing programs, LWC, LHWC, LSBN, LSBPNE	Funding	Develop career pathways to better prosperity (e.g. CNA/MA to LPN to RN, LPN to RN, and RN to APRN to graduate or doctoral prepared nurses and career transitions such as EMT or the military) Provide means of advancing careers through funded educational opportunities Increase funding for nursing schools and CNA programs

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
15.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Colleges of nursing, healthcare facilities, any institution that employs nurses with masters or doctoral degrees	Program/Funding	Increase academic practice partnerships between nursing pro-grams and healthcare institutions, specifically those that employ nurses with masters or doctoral degrees who can assist with clinical education Expand enrollment in nursing programs, subsidize nursing faculty salaries for competitiveness, integrate nursing faculty/nursing school as resource to healthcare institute Fully fund HBCUs to support healthcare degree offerings. Explore options to expand enrollment.
16.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Schools of nursing, community colleges, colleges and universities, healthcare facilities (rural and urban)	Program	Increase retention of the clinical workforce: Develop strategies to retain nurses and allied health team members, including anti bullying education and mental health support
17.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Schools of nursing, community colleges, colleges and universities, Louisiana Center for Nursing	Policy	Expand the current dataset of the Louisiana Center of Nursing to develop strategies that address identified disparities Include demographic information regarding the race, age and gender of students who meet nursing program admission criteria but who are not admitted
18.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	LDH Vocational and Technical training program	Program/Policy	Streamline and standardize certified nursing assistant (CNA) training to assist with staffing shortages
19.	Medicaid/ Payment/Reform	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Create a high-level group that includes hospitals (large, small, urban, rural, general and specialty), physician groups (small, large, primary care, single-specialty and multi-specialty), skilled nursing facilities labs, pharmacies, DME providers, and payers (commercial, Medicaid, Medicare Advantage) to address large, cross-cutting issues

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
20.	Medicaid/ Payment/Reform	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Focus on ensuring the state's Medicaid program provides an appropriate safety net for people to get health insurance and healthcare, given the impact of COVID-19 in areas or on populations that are disadvantaged economically and Louisiana's high poverty rate
21.	Medicaid/ Payment/Reform	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Allow the use of Lyft and Uber in the non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) broker program Implement models like those in Arizona, Tennessee, and Texas that allow rideshare companies to serve as NEMT providers, add flexibility to the healthcare delivery system, and increase transportation options for Medicaid members
22.	Rural Hospital Preservation	LDH	Program, funding	Maintain the principles of the Rural Hospital Preservation Act (RHPA) Maximize Medicaid rates to Rural Hospital Preservation Act Hospitals (RHPAH) Stabilize supplemental payments to rural hospitals (e.g. $1 million minimum per RHPAH) to afford access to 24/7 care in rural communities where high Medicare and impoverished populations live
23.	Rural Hospital Preservation	LDH	Policy/Legislation, Funding	Increase primary care provider and rural health clinic (RHC) reimbursement levels Where RHPAHs have an RHC, expand Medicaid reimbursement to include preventive care visits, as well as payments for monitoring health visits, timely testing, and dietary and prescription compliance Reduce out-of-state hospital reimbursement rates in areas near state borders to discourage out-of-state treatment of routine clinical and hospitalization cases

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
24.	Rural Hospital Preservation	LDH	Policy/Legislation, Funding	Provide expanded and exchanged facility payments to encourage telemedicine access for mental health and specialty services not available in RHPAH service areas
25.	Rural Hospital Preservation	LDH	Policy/Legislation, Funding	Make and enhance payments to RHPAHs to provide needed transportation services in rural areas where the usage of Lyft and Uber are limited or non-existent for non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) programs

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations: Medicaid Payment Reform

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Legislative	Funding/Policy	Research intellectual "brain drain" to develop programs for retaining nursing graduates and allied health professionals in Louisiana Procure grant funding for university to research reasons for intellectual brain drain
2.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Louisiana Workforce Commission	Policy/Funding	Enhance capitation funds for colleges of nursing to increase class sizes Include payback provision if schools fail to retain students or successfully articulate students through the program to the workforce
3.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Schools of nursing, community colleges, colleges, and universities	Funding	Provide means of increasing nursing faculty prepared to educate nurses at all degree levels Provide extra funding for faculty to increase class sizes and program options

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
4.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Louisiana Workforce Commission and Employers	Program	Endorse a 12-month nurse residency model that is competency-based and accredited for all RNs entering their practice
5.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Legislative	Policy/Legislation	Provide tax exemp-tion/incentives or grants to healthcare educators, clinical preceptors, and faculty Provide financial incen-tive for healthcare ed-ucators/faculty to in-crease clinical affilia-tion opportunities for nursing and allied health students
6.	Workforce Stabilization and Development	Legislative, Providers, Employers	Policy/Legislation Program/Funding	Establish loan forgiveness programs to encourage providers (e.g. MDs, PAs, FNPs, etc.) and allied health staff (e.g. RNs, LPNs, lab techs, X-ray techs, etc.) to return to RHPAHs
7.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Allow MCOs greater flexibility in adopting medical policies and clinical criteria guide-lines that move the program to be more aligned with commercial payers and Medicare Allow MCOs to follow the most up-to-date medical necessity guidelines based on evidence-based medicine, use of industry-wide standard billing practices, and national payment and coding guidelines Focus on ensuring Medicaid members receive the care they need given the unique depth and breadth of needs for the Medicaid-insured population, as well as the unique state and federal requirements of the Medicaid program
8.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH, CMS	Policy/Legislation	Change or eliminate policy that requires provision of services that are no more restrictive than fee-for-service (FFS) Medicaid; note: would require a federal change to Medicaid managed care policy Leverage policy changes to address MCO limitations in applying certain CMS guidelines, such as Multiple Procedure Payment Reduction (MPPR) for radiology, therapy, cardiovascular, ophthalmology, etc.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
9.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Create a separate inpatient rate for swing beds and skilled nursing, rather than reimbursing a full acute care per diem for a lower level of care
10.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Continue progress in moving providers along the APM Framework by focusing on pay for performance (APM CAT 2) In the next Medicaid procurement, request plans to show documented improvement in quality outcomes and chronic disease measures, subject to evaluation of ability to improve such measures and show demonstrated partnerships with providers to improve ambulatory quality measures for patient population
11.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH, MCOs	Policy/Legislation	Enhance Home Health, Long-Term Acute Care (LTAC) payments by MCOs to encourage greater provider participation in Healthy LA networks so that care can be moved expeditiously from inpatient acute care to more appropriate levels of care
12.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Increase reimbursement levels for all providers serving the age 16+ population, specifically targeting increased reimbursement for well visits, preventive screening services and vaccinations
13.	Medicaid/ Payment/Reform	LDH	Program	Evaluate Addiction Recovery Medical Home (ARMH) Models to transform long-term community-based treatment and recovery from all SUDs
14.	Medicaid/ Payment/Reform	LDH, LHA	Policy/Legislation	Adopt LDH's "Money Follows the Patient" model, which protects both rural and urban hospitals' financial stability by shoring up Medicaid reimbursement using a supplemental payment methodology that is compliant with CMS regulations

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
15.	Medicaid/ Payment/Reform	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Shift hospital inpatient reimbursements to inpatient prospective payment system models (PPS) Move away from the current per diem reimbursement Pursue the path that LDH previously examined in transitioning to the All Patients Re-fined (APR) DRG methodology, which can be tailored to the state program and follows the transition many other state Medicaid programs have made Consider keeping Critical Access Hospitals excluded from this process and continuing to reimburse them at their cost-targeted per diem, if necessary
15.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Continue progress in moving providers along the APM Framework by focusing on shared savings and shared risk (APM CAT3) Shift hospital outpatient reimbursements to outpatient prospective payment system models (OPPS) Move away from the current cost-to-charge ratio pricing with separate pricing for OP surgery and lab and therapy fee schedules Set the OPPS pricing level to be an equivalent to the current Medicaid pricing level either by hospital or on an aggregate basis for the program LDH can keep Critical Access Hospitals excluded from this process and continue to reimburse them at their cost-targeted per diem, if necessary

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
16.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH, Providers	Program, Policy, Legislation	Initiate a study focused on replicating CMS' value-based incentives in Medicaid, such as the Hospital Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) Program, which rewards acute care hospitals with incentive payments for the quality of care provided in the inpatient hospital setting Based on the results of this study and input from the Medicaid pro-gram and providers, consider implementing incentives and adjusting payments to hospitals based on the quality of care they deliver
17.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH, Providers	Program, Policy/ Legislation	Initiate a study focused on the Quality-Insights Hospital Incentive Program (Q-HIP) targeted at improving patient outcomes in a hospital setting and promoting healthcare value by financially rewarding hospitals for practicing evidence-based medicine and implementing best practices Based on the results of this study and input from the Medicaid program and providers, consider implementing Q-HIP program to tie hospital reimbursement to perinatal care quality performance
18.	Medicaid/ Payment/Reform	LDH	Program	Consider D-SNPs Medicare-Medicaid integration programs that include Fully Integrated Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan (FIDE-SNP) and Highly Integrated Dual Eligible (HIDE) SNP plan FIDE-SNP plans must have a contract with the state Medicaid program that complies with the MIPPA requirements and includes coverage of primary, acute, and long-term services and supports benefits HIDE SNPs with exclusively aligned enrollment must maintain clinical and financial responsibility for the provision of Medicare and required Medicaid benefits

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
19.	Medicaid/ Payment/Reform	LDH	Program, Policy, Funding	Invest in community health through coverage of community health worker services for Medicaid members with chronic disease
20.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH, MCOs	Program	Create a Louisiana Medicaid alternative payment model incubator Create a framework for MCOs to try innovative partnerships and payment models with interested providers under the oversight of LDH
21.	Medicaid/ Payment Reform	LDH	Policy/Legislation	Consider having the state sponsor a healthcare innovation "tournament" with tax incentives and other funding sources for businesses to locate in Louisiana and address healthcare priorities (i.e., BCBSLA and Ochsner's efforts with NOLAHI)
22.	Rural Hospital Preservation	LDH	Policy/Legislation	If an outpatient prospective payment system model is considered for base Medicaid outpatient payments, rural hospitals covered under the RHPA should be excluded in favor of retaining the payment method required under the RHPA
23.	Rural Hospital Preservation	Legislature	Funding	Make grant funding available for RHPAHs for replacing outdated inpatient areas in favor of more streamlined diagnostic and emergency services Provide base grants to ensure 24/7 access to care to support local industry growth and retention
24.	Rural Hospital Preservation	Legislature	Policy/Legislation	Establish tax relief programs for local industries that financially support local wellness, health monitoring and educational programs operated by local RHPAHs

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
25.	Form partnerships for added resiliency and economic growth	Businesses, Boards of Directors, CVBs, Economic development entities, Local and State governments	Programs Funding	Travel businesses, public entities, and non-profit organizations should come together to establish formal and informal partnerships (private, and public-private). These partnerships would be formed to pool human and financial capital and to create a more robust economic growth model for their businesses, communities, region, and the state. An example, from the Festivals/Parades subcommittee, is to work with the Governor and Congressional delegation to establish Mardi Gras as a SEAR 1 event, thereby increasing federal assistance for security. Other partnership examples come from the CVB subcommittee: 1. When appropriate, they suggest forming multi-parish CVBs and/or marketing partnerships. An example would be the northeast Louisiana parishes coming together to promote assets like Poverty Point, a World Heritage Site. 2. The creation of a strategic byways Co-operative Marketing Program to market the 19 scenic byways officially and cooperatively across the state.
26.	Increase education for and improvements in financial planning	Educational institutions, Businesses, Boards of Directors, CVBs, Economic development entities, Local and State governments	Program	Establish additional financial management and planning education for small business and travel entities Discuss the need for financial reserves to prepare for the next crisis

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
27.	Use diversity and equity as a superior growth model	Travel industry employees, Businesses, Boards of Directors, CVBs, Economic development entities, Local and State governments	Tools/Processes	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. The CVB subcommittee has offered several suggestions for producing greater diversity and inclusion in their sphere of influence through education, certification, and mentorship programs. These specific recommendations can be found in the full CVB subcommittee report in the addendum.
28.	Secure additional stimulus funding for travel industry business operation	Travel industry associations, businesses and Local/State/Federal government leaders	Funding Policy/Legislation	The travel industry must continue to advocate for additional funding for business operations if there is a threat and until full recovery is realized.
29.	Create more robust emergency crisis management plans to react to a pandemic	Employers, managers, business owners, Local and State governments	Tools/Processes	In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, business of all types reflected on the lessons learned and developed more detailed, effective plans to respond to future natural disasters. We believe the same should be done in the wake of COVID-19 to help travel organizations quickly implement safety measures after any future similar outbreaks and to hopefully shorten the recovery time.

Hospitality & Tourism

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

The travel industry across the world has been decimated by COVID-19, and Louisiana's travel economy is no exception. In a recent research report produced by Tourism Economics and Oxford Economics, the U.S. Travel Association stated that travel was down this year as much as 89% over the same weeks in March, April, and May 2019. These three months are typically estimated as some of the busiest months of the year for the travel industry, especially in Louisiana.

The revenue lost over the past months will never be made up and the outlook for revenue projections for the remainder of 2020 and all of 2021 still forecast a reduction, especially for hotel occupancy and revenue for Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs) or Destination Management and Marketing Organizations (DMMOs) compared to a 2019 baseline. The convention centers, sports facilities, hotels, restaurants, events, festivals, outdoor activities, and small businesses in every Louisiana community are dependent on the DMMO to drive customers through their doors. The key to the overall success of the hospitality and tourism industry is securing additional funding for these DMMOs to use for travel marketing and promotional activity.

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
The U.S. Travel Association's further analysis revealed while the economy is in the midst of a recession, the travel industry is in a depression; overall travel industry unemployment is 51%, twice the unemployment of the worst year of the Great Depression. The numbers for Louisiana show an even bleaker picture: the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Current Employment Statistics projected the percentage unemployment for Louisiana's travel sector could be closer to 55%. As Louisiana's 4th largest employer supporting over 242,000 jobs, one can safely conclude that businesses and workers that make up the hospitality and tourism industry have been some of the economically hardest hit!

In 2019, the travel industry in Louisiana broke all records by welcoming 52.3 million visitors who spent $18.9 billion and generated $1.92 billion in state and local taxes. These visitors saved each Louisiana household approximately $1,100 in 2019 taxes. And, 2020 was on pace to be another record-breaking year for Louisiana's travel economy. That all changed when, at the peak of the COVID-19 crisis, estimates showed the Louisiana economy was losing approximately $360 million per week in visitor spending, resulting in millions of losses in subsequent state and local tax revenues.

1. Combined state plans and processes brought into alignment
2. Crisis-informed snapshot of the state of the economy and opportunity in Louisiana
3. Proactive and braided resourcing
4. Collaborative regional processes

Collectively these items represent the structural redesign necessary to build a more resilient Louisiana, emphasizing alignment and collaboration at every level and laser-focused on the needs of the person and the family. Currently, there are multiple statewide strategic plans, many of them federally mandated, across agencies and entities focused on human development. Likewise, there are multiple councils, advisory groups, and task forces assigned to various and often overlapping portions of the education and workforce development landscape. Achieving alignment between the combined state plans required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, commonly called Perkins V, is especially important. In addition, the state Workforce Investment Council (WIC), which is business led and includes membership from all Cabinet-level agencies and other WIOA-mandated partners, should drive meaningful, and measurable outcomes. With full alignment of mission and vision among all stakeholders, we have the opportunity to take Louisiana to the forefront of person-centered resiliency. This is a call we must not fail to heed. Education is the way forward, but it must be purposeful, robust and lifelong to impart the skills and competencies necessary to ensure a clear pathway to meaningful employment. Equity is achieved through improvements in education and employment outcomes: higher educational attainment, higher degree completion rates, higher wages, and access to pathways leading to rewarding and meaningful work regardless of race, gender, income and place of origin. To start the process of change, we must understand where we are today. We provide the following data to illustrate the baseline and to provide a foundation for goal setting.

Here below are the final overall recommendations from the RLC Hospitality Tourism Task Force:

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Protect travel industry employees and guests	Employers and business owners	Tools/Processes	Travel businesses should adapt operations, modify employee practices and/or redesign public spaces to help protect employees and customers
2.	Implement touchless solutions to limit exposure	Business owners and guests	Tools/Processes	Travel businesses should consider implementing touchless solutions to limit disease exposure and enable a positive travel experience.
3.	Adopt enhanced sanitation procedures	Employers, employees, and guests	Tools/Processes	Travel businesses should adopt and implement enhanced sanitation procedures specifically designed to combat the transmission of COVID-19. The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) has established the Stay Safe guidelines that have been adopted by all major hotel brands. The Louisiana Bed & Breakfast Association and many of the short-term rentals in Louisiana have adopted guidelines based on AH&LA's Stay Safe.
4.	Promote health screening and provide health resources	Employers, employees, and guests	Tools/Processes	Travel businesses should promote health screening measures for employees and provide health resources to customers.
5.	Establish procedures based on CDC guidelines	Employers and employees	Tools/Processes	Travel businesses should establish a set of procedures aligned with CDC guidance for employees testing positive for the virus.
6.	Follow food and beverage best practices	Employers, employees, and guests	Tools/Processes	Travel businesses should follow best practices in food and beverage service to promote health of employees and customers. The National Restaurant Association has established guidelines as part of their ServSafe program.
7.	Secure additional stimulus funding and supportive policies and for travel industry business operation	Travel industry associations, businesses, and local/state/federal government leaders	Funding Policy/Legislation	The travel industry must continue to advocate for additional funding and support policies for businesses as long as there is a threat and until full recovery is realized.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
8.	Communicate pending conditions that could affect events, festivals, parades, and meetings with longer lead, planning and sponsorship timelines.	Event organizers, Meeting planners, Local and state governmental leaders	Policy/Legislation	When faced with any potential event (i.e. storm, pandemic, increased fees, etc.) that could affect organizers' ability to receive a permit or hold an event, Governmental agencies should actively communicate with organizers to advise of pending conditions to allow organizers the ability to evaluate options for cancellations or continuations.
9.	Increase short-term employment for displaced workers through the expansion and establishment of broadband throughout the state.	Businesses, and Local/state/federal government leaders	Funding Policy/Legislation Programs	Broadband expansion is critical to the economic and tourism health of all parts of our state, especially our rural areas. Outdoor recreation, such as large fishing tournaments and other similar events have become dependent upon reliable broadband services. Small businesses must have reliable broadband services to properly service their customers and guests Broadband is critical to marketing our rural scenic byways and connecting our small communities and their respective "Main Street" small businesses.
10.	Create a safe and strong rebound of Louisiana's travel industry by protecting current revenue streams and securing additional funding for state, regional and community branding and marketing efforts	Travel industry associations, Businesses, and Local/state/federal government leaders	Funding Policy/Legislation Programs	The travel industry must continue to advocate and secure funding for state, regional and community marketing efforts for next three years of recovery We ask the legislature to protect all existing funding sources for CVBs. It is recommended that the legislature take immediate action in the next session to allocate additional funding by line item through the Office of Lt. Governor to DMMOs in the compelling interest of rebuilding and restoring the tourism economy. The revenue lost over the past four months will never be made up and the outlook for revenue projections for the remainder of 2020 and all of 2021 still forecast a reduction in hotel occupancy and revenue for CVBs/DMMO's compared to 2019 baseline. The small businesses in each community are dependent on the DMMO to drive additional customers and business through their doors, and in order to do so, DMMO's need funding for marketing and promotional activity.

1B. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Additional recommendations per the RLC Hospitality and Tourism Task Force Subcommittees that were formed to address specific travel industry areas are outlined for festivals and parades, cultural attractions, hotels and accommodations, outdoor adventure, youth sporting events, convention and visitor bureaus (CVBs) and meetings and conventions in the Addendum to this report and submitted to the Resilient Louisiana Commission website.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Create a safe and strong rebound of Louisiana's travel industry by protecting current revenue streams and securing additional funding for state, regional and community branding and marketing efforts	Businesses, Boards of Directors, CVBs, Economic development entities, Local and State governments	Programs Funding	Travel businesses, public entities, and non-profit organizations should come together to establish formal and informal partnerships (private, and public-private).
2.	Diversify revenue streams for travel industry businesses and organizations when possible	Business owners, CVBs, Boards of Directors, Local and State governments	Funding Policy/Legislation Programs	This will be more challenging for some types of travel organizations than others, but all travel industries should explore options for diversifying income and producing new revenue streams A few examples of diversifying revenue streams for the CVBs or destination marketing and management organizations (DMMOs) that have proven to be effective in other areas of the country could be voluntary assessment districts, a 501(c)(6) membership component or a tourism improvement district special assessment. Cultural attractions should explore revenue strategies related to donations, on-line commerce, sponsorships, fee-based distance learning and other digital programming.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
	Form partnerships for added resiliency and economic growth	Businesses, Boards of Directors, CVBs, Economic development entities, Local and State governments	Programs Funding	Travel businesses, public entities, and non-profit organizations should come together to establish formal and informal partnerships (private, and public-private). These partnerships would be formed to pool human and financial capital and to create a more robust economic growth model for their businesses, communities, region, and the state. An example, from the Festivals/Parades subcommittee, is to work with the Governor and Congressional delegation to establish Mardi Gras as a SEAR 1 event, thereby increasing federal assistance for security. Other partnership examples come from the CVB subcommittee: 1. When appropriate, they suggest forming multi-parish CVBs and/or marketing partnerships. An example would be the northeast Louisiana parishes coming together to promote assets like Poverty Point, a World Heritage Site. 2. The creation of a strategic byways Cooperative Marketing Program to market the 19 scenic byways officially and cooperatively across the state.
4.	Increase education for and improvements in financial planning	Educational institutions, Businesses, Boards of Directors, CVBs, Economic development entities, Local and State governments	Programs	Establish additional financial management and planning education for small business and travel entities Discuss the need for financial reserves to prepare for the next crisis

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
5.	Use diversity and equity as a superior growth model	Travel industry employees, Businesses, Boards of Directors, CVBs, Economic development entities, Local and State governments	Tools/Processes	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. The CVB subcommittee has offered several suggestions for producing greater diversity and inclusion in their sphere of influence through education, certification, and mentorship programs. These specific recommendations can be found in the full CVB subcommittee report in the addendum.
6.	Secure additional stimulus funding for travel industry business operation	Travel industry associations, businesses and Local/State/Federal government leaders	Funding Policy/Legislation	The travel industry must continue to advocate for additional funding for business operations if there is a threat and until full recovery is realized.
7.	Create more robust emergency crisis management plans to react to a pandemic	Employers, managers, business owners, Local and State governments	Tools/Processes	In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, business of all types reflected on the lessons learned and developed more detailed, effective plans to respond to future natural disasters. We believe the same should be done in the wake of COVID-19 to help travel organizations quickly implement safety measures after any future similar outbreaks and to hopefully shorten the recovery time.

In closing, let us say that the travel industry and its workers are the very definition of "resilient." Since 9/11 this industry has proven its ability to bounce back through each crisis that occurred. Its small businesses' owners, managers, and employees expect to return stronger and better. COVID-19 will be no different! But we cannot be forgotten, marginalized, or taken for granted by public and private leadership. The industry must be seen as the vital industry it is, with an enormous impact on the quality of life and the economy of Louisiana and our communities.

We have come to believe that the devastating economic impact of COVID-19 on economies world-wide just may be the travel industry's "George Bailey Moment!" Just as Jimmy Stewart's character was able to see the impact his life had on his beloved town of Pottersville in the classic movie It's a Wonderful Life, we now have all experienced the sometimes invisible impact tourism has on even the smallest community's economy and quality of life. As Clarence the Angel said to George "Strange, isn't it? Each man's life touches so many other lives. When he isn't around, he leaves an awful hole, doesn't he?"

Louisiana, like other tourism-dependent states, sees a world without tourism and it isn't pretty. But, the loss of travel and tourism has left larger holes in our lives than just dollars, tax revenues and jobs. Travel allows us to celebrate, to connect, to break down barriers and to create stories and memories—all the things our world needs as we emerge from this devastating crisis. As Brad Dean, CEO of Discover Puerto Rico, said in his article Our George Bailey Moment!, "Travel stimulates innovation and nurtures progress. Travel teaches, enlightens, and inspires. Studies show that travel makes you healthier, happier, and more productive. Travel is a force for good that transforms lives and communities."

So, now that COVID-19 has left its mark and changed the way we live, work and play, we leave you with these words to consider as we all move forward together to establish a long-term game plan for a more resilient future Louisiana economy...

“

If you build a place people want to **VISIT,** you build a place where people want to **LIVE.**

If you build a place where people want to live, you build a place where people want to **WORK.**

If you build a place where people want to work, you’ll build a place where **BUSINESS** has to be.

And, if you build a place where business has to be, you’ll build a place where people have to **VISIT**.”

Maura Gast

Visit Irving

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Subcommittee Reports

RLC Hospitality & Tourism Task Force comprises five subcommittees, which outlined additional recommendations that may be found below:
Outdoor Tourism Subcommittee Final Report
Hotels Accommodations Subcommittee Final Report
Festivals and Parades Subcommittee Final Report
Cultural Attractions Subcommittee Final Report
CVB/DMMOs Subcommittee Final Report

2B. Members of the Hospitality & Tourism Task Force:

Ben Berthelot
Christy Brown
Cleveland Spears
Dr. Dean Smith
Debra Mayhew
Don Kelly
Doug Bourgeois
Elie Khoury
Elroy James
Joanna Folse-Alexander
Janice Delerno Verges
Jill Kidder
JP Morrell
Kelley Lloyd
Kyle Edmiston
Kyle France
Lane Ewing
Linda Curtis-Sparks
Mark Romig
Melvin Rodrigue
Michael Smith
Nash Patel
Nick Zaver
Ralph Calhoun
Ralph Ney
Reeves Price
Stephen Watson
Walt Leger

2C. Additional Resources

New Orleans Ernest Morial Center Health and Safety Plan
Coronavirus Survey Slides Wave 12 Highlights
STR Recommended Operating Procedures
Gov. Edwards Announces Louisiana's Roadmap to Resilience Will Start Phase 2 on Friday, June 5 | Office of Governor John Bel Edwards
Can This Business Open? | Office of Governor John Bel Edwards
Phase 2 Reopening in Louisiana: What's Open and What's Closed?

Resources from Previous Weeks:

Associations Now Hosting Face-to-Face Meetings
K12 Summer Athletic Guidance
Proclamation #58 JBE 2020
Public pool guidance
Updated U.S. Travel Top Priorities
HEROES Act
U.S. Travel 501(c)(6) Resources from U.S. Travel
New CDC Guidance for Reopening Pools
New York Times article
Artists, live industry brace for a year without concerts: 'Is there a better place for spreading disease?'
Future of Festivals
White House Phased Guidelines
Wynn Las Vegas Health and Sanitation Program
Alabama Phase 1 Plan
Louisiana Tourism Statistics
Tennessee COVID-19 Recovery Plan
Longwoods International COVID-19 Travel Sentiment Survey
U.S. Travel Association / Get the Facts
Destinations Analysts
American Hotel & Lodging Association

IT & Communications

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
The impact to the Information Technology and Communication (ITC) Sector should be understood and examined from two perspectives:
Resilience of ITC sector providers: Information Technology and Communications sector providers were either considered critical infrastructure or were able to work from home during the immediate and current duration of the pandemic. In some cases, IT companies whose business models were directly dependent on certain sectors such as Oil and Gas or Manufacturing, grappled with the displacement of workers. However, overall, IT jobs have proven to be fairly resilient, with demand for certain areas being underscored (e.g. cybersecurity and cloud services or platforms). In the case of the Communications sub-sector, immediate needs for increased capacity, bandwidth, and commitments to keep Louisiana residents connected digitally were quickly reinforced.

Dependency of other sectors on ITC providers and infrastructure: COVID-19 highlighted the critical nature of broadband accessibility and adoption for our state. Across every sector, availability and access of broadband was a critical ingredient that impacted the degree of resilience related to education, healthcare, and commerce. In areas where access and adoption were limited, impacts were disproportionately felt. Beyond connectivity, availability of devices and digital literacy were also highlighted as areas of improvement. Our recommendations set forth in this document focus on improving Louisiana's resilience in these areas, with a specific focus on ensuring equity in every corner of the state in both rural and urban settings.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
The primary factors that made the Information Technology and Communication sector, as well as sectors that depend on IT and Communications infrastructure, particularly vulnerable to disruption included:
Consistency of Guidelines and Access to PPE: During the immediate impacts of the pandemic, the Communications sub-sector was deemed critical infrastructure. Access to PPE and consistency of operating guidelines across states and within the state presented a risk to the safe and reliable provision of services. This identified gap was successfully navigated but should be noted as an important factor for future catastrophic events.

Availability of Broadband: Availability of broadband services in rural and urban areas had a direct impact on the resilience of education, healthcare, and commerce. Recommendations within this document underscore how to improve this in an equitable manner, including the removal of barriers to deployment.
Adoption Rates of Broadband Services: 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. Low adoption rates created another area of vulnerability for education (e.g. distance learning), healthcare services, and commerce. Similar to availability, recommendations within this document underscore how to improve adoption across the state in an equitable manner.

Digital Capabilities and Literacy: Through cross-sector interviews, our task force identified a number of areas where increased digital literacy, digital dexterity, best practices, and the ability to exchange information would empower residents, businesses, non-profits, and other organizations to pivot to digital capabilities to improve resilience.

Ecosystem Diversity: Within the IT sub-sector, there were some immediate and ongoing ripple effects for the IT workforce. For example, IT services related to hospitality, manufacturing, or energy sectors have seen some disruption. IT providers with diverse service portfolios, and regions of the state with a number of IT based employers have been able to absorb these impacts with a higher degree of resilience. This points to the fact that encouraging the growth of diverse technology-oriented ecosystems, with an eye towards equity, can create increased resilience and economic growth opportunities for the state.

Impacts from Automation and Artificial Intelligence: The impacts on global economies related to automation and artificial intelligence are well documented by many industry analysts and experts. While these technologies will disrupt and impact the future of work by eliminating some jobs, it is also expected that they will create opportunities for new types of work. Louisiana may have particularly vulnerable economic sectors related to these emerging technologies and what is referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) [https://www.cio.com/article/3523836/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-explained.html].

The ITC did not have the resources to examine these potential impacts beyond cross-sector stakeholder analysis and impacts. However, it was clear to the task force that a detailed economic assessment that can inform education, workforce development, and ecosystem creation policies should be a critical input to Louisiana's long-term roadmap for increased resilience.

Equity: The Information Technology and Communications Task Force recognizes that 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. As a result, topics related to equity are addressed across many of the recommendations that are found in this document. While the principles of equity should be a lens applied to every recommendation, we have noted recommendations most directly related to the RLC Equity Principles (and associated questions put forth by the RLC) with an asterisk next to the recommendation number in sections 1C and 1D.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19

The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Most important strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Consistency of reopening guidelines	Government	Guidance	Re-opening guidelines should specifically incorporate CDC guidelines and practices; doing so will allow a consistent approach based on expert advice. To the extent states adopt their own principles, they should do so on a region-wide basis to provide consistency for businesses with employees that travel across state boundaries for work and commuting purposes. Where states and localities in the same region are not on the same reopening timeline, adopting consistent terminology and guidelines for each phase (e.g., the parameters for Phase 1 are the same in Illinois as they are in Michigan) will provide some degree of uniformity to what is likely going to be a complicated situation.
2.	IT/ Communications Displaced Worker Programs	Government, Businesses	Program, Tools/ Processes	Recommend examining what types of resources, communication or otherwise, might be rapidly deployed when/if technology-based workers are impacted by the pandemic within the State. Consider establishing support mechanisms to quickly connect impacted tech workers with other tech companies on a regional or a statewide basis who may be hiring in order to retain this hard to find talent within Louisiana. Apply a similar lens to upcoming college graduates who may experience a potential downturn in demand for tech sector employment given the possible trends being reported from various hiring related websites as noted above. This was a Charge 1 Recommendation by the ITC Task Force, but given the rippling effects that may potentially be felt in the technology sector, continued evaluation and refinement of measures already being taken by LED and regional EDOs should continue.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
3.	Liability Protection	Government	Policy/legislation	Clarity and guidance on liability protection will be helpful during reopening phases.
4.	Spreading awareness of telecom company offerings that will support the reopening of businesses in LA.	Business	Program	A number of technology solutions in addition to enterprise and residential high speed internet service are available to support businesses and citizens of the state as they transition to the "new normal." Not all stakeholders are fully aware of these capabilities or offerings. Mechanisms to help educate the public and businesses on how these capabilities can accelerate recovery will support the overall recovery of the state's economy.
5.	Child-Care Services and Solutions	Government, Business	Program	As phased re-opening of the state's economy occurs, and both IT and Communications employees return to work, child care solutions for employees that cannot work from home will be needed.
6.	Working from Home Training Resources	Business	Program, Tools/ Processes	Additional training resources to address challenges and maximize such opportunities to enable employees to work from home would be beneficial.
7.	Wi-Fi Hotspot Finder Service	Government	Tools/Processes	Many states or cities have stood up Free Wi-Fi hotspot finder tools that the public can use to locate and find community access, free-Wi-Fi hotspots. This could be useful for residents who do not have necessary internet connectivity on a stable basis. During cross-sector interviews, stakeholders noted that residents were traveling to local school locations to access Wi-Fi hotspots. A tool such as this could make the identification and thus accessibility of these hot spots available to a broader range of the public.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
8.	Knowledge sharing / clearinghouse capabilities	Government	Program, Tools/ Processes	During multiple cross-sector Task Force discussions, various sectors noted that it would be useful to establish increased knowledge sharing/clearinghouse capabilities leveraging information technology solutions to provide access to tailored, vetted, and "single source of truth" information regarding impacts to their sector as well as reopening guidelines. The state has launched the OpenSafely.la.gov site to help with information communication of this type. If it is not already underway, engaging in end user/customer experience sessions related to this site and other information sources being made available by the state could provide valuable feedback for areas of continued improvement related to communication. This would also inform long term recommendations regarding knowledge sharing capabilities. This could also focus on educational resources and knowledge around liability concerns associated with digital capabilities and data collection related to PII data collected by small businesses, as a part of reopening guidelines. Reference: Information Technology and Communications (ITC) / Small Business and Retail (SBR) Cross-Sector Discussion

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Most important strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Cross-Sector Broadband Collaboration to address access to and awareness of broadband for everyone in Louisiana.	Government, Business	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Governance, Tools/ Processes, Funding	Leverage existing expertise of the State of Louisiana's Broadband for Everyone in Louisiana (BEL) Com-mission, paired with the resources (e.g. CARES act) and engagement from economic sectors of the RLC to develop immediate action items that accelerate broadband access across the state. Strategies that are adopted by the state to increase broadband access should include developing a plan to promote broadband adoption (in the many places where it is available, the adoption rate is low.) Create a clearinghouse for information sharing and exchange to empower communities and citizens related to Broadband. The Broadband for Everyone in Louisiana Commission and activities like the RLC will create a large volume of information regarding broad-band in rural and urban areas that can be used to guide policy and inform residents of broadband options. Continue to explore the potential for electric cooperatives (including rural co-ops) to help address the digital divide and foster economic opportunities for all Louisianans. Recommend considering a stream-lined permitting process to quickly and thoroughly review and approve infrastructure placement related to telecommunications infrastructure. Work across this coalition to capitalize on new and emerging funding options such as CARES Act funding and the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund(RDOF).

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				Evaluate and mitigate any Federal (e.g. USDA) eligibility criteria concerns that are impacting ability to apply for and receive Federal funding. This should be examined in the context of CARES Act funding opportunities. This includes both the definition of what parts of the state are covered currently (25 Megabits per second (Mbps) down-load and 3 Mbps upload) as well as USDA's disposition that local governments may be prohibited from offering broadband service due to the Fair Competition Act (even though they technically are not). Reference: Information Technology and Communications (ITC) / Rural Development (RD) Cross-Sector Discussion Note that in almost every cross-sector interview held by the ITC Task Force, expanding access and increasing awareness about broadband in both rural and urban areas was noted as one of the most critical areas for Louisiana to focus on with respect to resilience.
2.	Remove Barriers to Broadband Access	Government, Business	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Governance, Tools/Processes, Funding	Ensuring continued strength of broadband networks and removing barriers to deployment should be a part of addressing the pandemic and its aftermath. 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. Expanding connectivity doesn't come without its challenges. Deploying broadband infrastructure isn't as simple as merely laying wires underground: that's the easy part. The hard part is facing expensive and difficult pre-deployment barriers.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				Ensuring continued strength of broadband networks and removing barriers to deployment should be a part of addressing the pandemic and its aftermath. 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. Expanding connectivity doesn't come without its challenges. De-ploying broadband infrastructure isn't as simple as merely laying wires underground: that's the easy part. The hard part is facing ex-pensive and difficult pre-deployment barriers. Before building out a new network, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) must negotiate with local governments for access to publicly owned "rights-of-way" so they can place their wires above or below both public and private property. ISP's also need "pole attachment" con-tracts with public utilities so they can rent space on utility poles for above ground wires, or in ducts and conduits for wires laid under-ground. Rights of way and pole attachment fees can double the cost of network construction. Removing barriers to entry and deployment are critical, and will require federal, state, and local governments work together to solve the digital divide. Removing impediments to deployment (such as pole attachment fees, permit-ting delays, franchise administration, shot clocks on requests for access and permit approvals, and access to railroad rights-of-way) will help accelerate broadband infrastructure build out in Louisiana.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				During the 2020 Regular Session, House Speaker Clay Schexnayder passed HCR 77 to request that the Broadband for Everyone in Louisiana (BEL) Commission identify public and private sector barriers to effective broadband and wireless telecommunication service expansion in Louisiana and provide recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Commerce on or before January 1, 2021 on how to remove those barriers. Studying and removing these barriers would benefit Louisiana families, businesses, consumers, and students and allow for a more robust and better-connected economy.
3.	Communications Sec-tor Access to PPE	Government, Business	Guidelines, Program	During the immediate impact phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, telecommunication providers were deemed essential businesses. As such, business did not stop. Modifications were implemented related to the installation and repair process and customer service center operations. Insufficient availa-bility and supply of PPE, disinfect-ant including disinfecting wipes, and hand sanitizer was a risk for employees, Louisiana residents, and the state's overall resilience. To the extent possible, the state should examine and implement a plan that includes a more reliable and resilient supply chain for PPE for this and other industries considered critical infrastructure in the event of another, similar pandemic of this kind.
4.	Cybersecurity resource capacity for targeted economic sectors	Government, Business, Non-Profits	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Governance, Tools/Processes, Funding	Leverage work and support from the Louisiana Cybersecurity Commission to develop near/long term roadmaps for establishing programs that create cybersecurity capacity for sectors that need assistance (non-profits, education, local government)

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
5.	CARES Act + IT/ Communications Analysis	Government	Funding	Engage resources to examine funding paths via the CARES Act that include the Coronavirus Relief Fund, Non-Competitive CARES Act Grants, and Competitive CARES Act grants to determine how these funding sources can support initiatives related to broadband, cybersecurity, and IT/ Communications Workforce and Economic Development related initiatives.
6.	Modernization of technology related economic development incentive programs to broaden the ecosystem of technology jobs across Louisiana.	Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Governance, Tools/Processes, Funding	Modernization of proven/successful economic development incentive programs (e.g. DM, QJ) to recognize new IT related job creation areas in this sub sector could attract additional growth as well as diversify types of IT jobs being incentivized by the state. Note that according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, STEM occupations have a 128% higher median wage compared to non-STEM occupations (https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/stem-employment.htm) Modernization could focus on roles in the tech sector such as cybersecurity, database and system administrators, cloud engineering, etc. These roles are technology occupations that have higher median annual wages that exceed Computer Programmers by as much as 15%.
7.	Incorporate Inclusive Economic Growth incentives into new/existing economic development programs to advance equitable economic opportunity for demographics with-in Louisiana that are underrepresented in technology fields.	Government, Business, Non-Profits	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Governance, Tools/Processes, Funding	Initiate an Inclusive Economic Development Incentive Roadmap effort with a goal of engaging stakeholders to develop a long-term roadmap to orient appropriate economic development incentives in a manner that supports equitable economic opportunity for all of Louisiana. Incorporate research of national best practices, comprehensive stakeholder engagement, review of historic economic development incentive use, and needs of communities across the state. Example: City of Indianapolis in partnership with Develop Indy, Brookings, and Central Indiana Corporate Partnership.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
8.	Research, establish and incorporate Community Impact Network concepts into existing economic development program requirements.	Government, Business, Non-Profits	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Governance, Tools/Processes, Funding	State, Regional, or Parish economic development organizations can establish Community Impact Network programs which are designed such that businesses receiving economic incentives commit to supporting initiatives from a menu of inclusive economic growth or equity programs such as related to STEM education, workforce development, internships, apprenticeships, diversity hiring/training, etc.
9.	Promote and recognize equity-focused businesses across the state with a program similar to Louisiana Department of Health's Well-Ahead Louisiana Initiative.	Government, Business	Program	Establish a voluntary program that mirrors some of the concepts of the Well-Ahead Louisiana Initiative but is focused on recognizing places and organizations that are making a conscious effort through tangible actions, to improve the diversity and inclusivity of their work-place.
10.	Roadmap through and beyond Automation and Artificial Intelligence impacts on Louisiana's economy	Government	Program	The potential impacts to various economic sectors of Louisiana could be vast. It is widely recognized that while these emerging technologies may negatively impact certain jobs, many experts believe that these forces will also create new jobs and opportunities for our residents. We recommend the state establish a team to analyze the potential impacts, assess possibilities for new opportunities that may emerge for our workforces across multiple sectors, and build out a roadmap for the state that will establish the tools needed to take advantage of these macroeconomic forces.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
11.	Tracking progress on Equity in Information Technology and Communications Sector	Government, Business	Program	In order to manage the process of trying to improve the diversity of the IT and Communications workforce, we recommend that the state determine a set of benchmark data elements that measure how diverse and inclusive this workforce is within the state. This will be required in order to measure the impact of policies and programs put forward that are targeted to increasing equity within the sector. This recommendation would probably be applicable across multiple sectors. State policies and programs could be assessed against established targets. Specific data that could be tracked include: Employees overall, by function, seniority and tenure, Employee status (full-time / part-time / contractor), Salary, etc.
12.	Marketing coalition and program focused on talent attraction for IT professionals and IT companies	Government, Business	Program	As noted in the Opportunities section of the SWOT analysis, the dual trends of IT workforce supply chains for organizations, paired with the pre-COVID-19 trend of IT talent relocating to low cost/high quality of life areas presents an opportunity for Louisiana to build on the growth it has seen in the tech sector. Develop and execute on a plan that markets Louisiana's unique aspects for quality of life, low cost of living, and growing access to IT talent for these two audiences in order to capitalize on these workforce and supply chain trends that will continue to rebalance post-COVID-19. Regional EDOs could consider programs similar to Tulsa Remote, which offer incentives to individuals to relocate to a region or city, allowing them to take advantage of a lower cost of living, higher quality of life location while working remotely for their occupation. This should build on existing LED and regional EDO work that was under way prior to the pandemic.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
13.	Creating statewide procurement coalition to maximize statewide purchasing power	Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Governance, Tools/Processes, Funding	Implement a process and governance model that enables state and local governments to gather common parties to support consistent supply/procurement behaviors to leverage the scale of Louisiana communities via common buying.
14.	Expansion of Louisiana Procurement Technical Assistance Center program to include large business partnership alliances and expertise to assist in expanding innovation ecosystems across the state.	Government, Business	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Governance, Tools/Processes, Funding	Work with large and small business coalitions across the state to explore and create partnership alliances across organizations to support Louisiana based small businesses in obtaining and performing under federal, state, and local contracts. This partnership alliance could support potential creation of innovation ecosystems that capitalize on unique strengths of Louisiana in areas such as diversification of energy industry, manufacturing, healthcare, coastal restoration and water management. Note: Louisiana's Procurement Technical Assistance Center was established to generate employment and improve the general economy of Louisiana by assisting business firms in obtaining and performing under the U.S. Department of Defense, other federal agencies, state and local government contracts.
15.	Scale registered Apprenticeship Programs for jobs in STEM fields across Louisiana.	Government, Business	Program	Registered Apprenticeship programs represent a real tool that can assist Louisiana in addressing the diversity gap in STEM fields. Apprenticeship programs in the state related to IT are being piloted in certain areas with some companies but have the potential to be scaled out to serve a larger set of organizations across multiple parts of the state. Leveraging the momentum of the partnerships and collaboration started via the ITC Task Force, businesses should be pooled together from across the state to engage in an effort to scale out Louisiana

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				Workforce Commission's Registered Apprenticeship Program. Efforts related to this were underway prior to the pandemic and this recommendation is intended to build on that momentum moving forward.
16.	Knowledge sharing / clearinghouse paired with marketplace capabilities	Government	Policy/Legislation, Governance, Tools/ Processes, Funding	During multiple cross-sector Task Force discussions, various sectors noted that it would be useful to establish increased knowledge sharing/clearinghouse capabilities leveraging information technology solutions to provide access to tailored, vetted, and "single source of truth" information regarding impacts to their sector as well as reopening guidelines. Our "short term" recommendation relates to basic knowledge sharing. This longer term recommendation is more oriented towards establishing clearinghouse or knowledge sharing marketplaces in addition to knowledge sharing. These marketplaces could include prevetted, small or large businesses that employ Louisiana residents, who provide e-commerce, cybersecurity, training, and other services that may help Louisiana businesses become more resilient over time. Please refer to ITC Information Technology and Communications (ITC) / Small Business and Retail (SBR) Cross-Sector Discussion Meeting Notes for additional details.
17.	Incentive Programs to "get a game plan" for resiliency related to topics such as cybersecurity, business continuity planning, digital capabilities	Government, Business, Non-Profits	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Governance, Tools/Processes, Funding	Evaluate and consider implementation of programs to incentivize business to "get a game plan" for resiliency related to topics such as cybersecurity, business continuity planning, digital capabilities. Objective is to incentivize small businesses to have capacity to address ecommerce, cybersecurity, or other digital capabilities or skill sets to enable resiliency for future events. Would require necessary control mechanisms around program of this type such as max credit amounts, clear evaluation and award criteria, transparency, expected and measurable results, etc.

Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
			Could be a sliding scale based on business size (e.g. revenue, level of ITC maturity, DBE, etc.) Reference: ITC Information Technology and Communications (ITC) / Small Business and Retail (SBR) Cross-Sector Discussion Meeting Notes for additional details.

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

Methodology: The following methodology was used by the Information Technology and Communications Task Force to develop the sector impact assessment and recommendations.

- Cross-Sector interviews were conducted by Information Technology and Communications Task Force members with each Resilient Louisiana Commission Task Force team across all 15 sectors of the commission. Additional stakeholder interviews were conducted with entities within each sector wherever possible.
- Research from industry analysts and 3rd party organizations was collected and used to inform both the sector assessment and recommendations. These sources are noted throughout this document. Some examples include the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Forbes.com, and McKinsey & Company analyst reports.
- The Information Technology and Communications Task Force has incorporated Charge 1 content where deemed still relevant, timely, and in response to Charge 2 guidance questions.
- A detailed Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) Analysis was performed by the Information Technology and Communications Task Force members. Pairing the results of this SWOT analysis with industry analysis and input from cross-sector meetings helped guide the recommendations set forth.

2A. Sector Impact Assessment

Information Technology Assessment

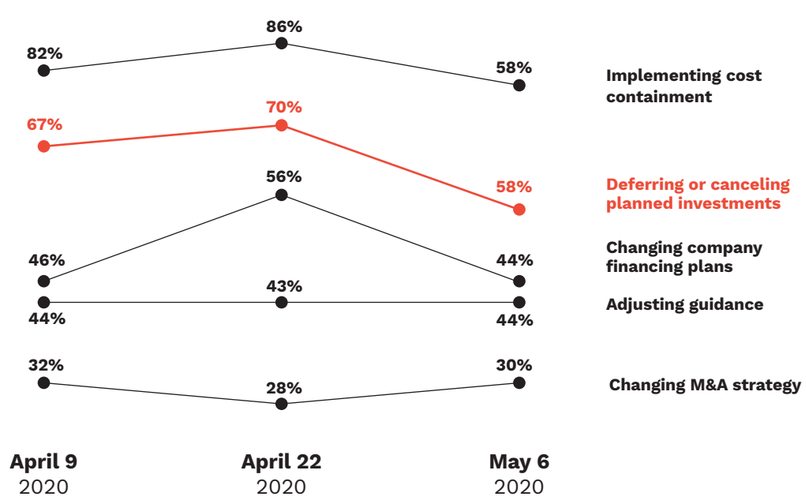
Across most of the IT industry (except in places where client or business requirements "mandate" an onsite presence), technology based jobs transitioned quickly to work from home models. In some cases, for IT Consulting firms specifically, transitioning to Work from Home patterns did require discussion and agreement from clients as some IT Consulting contracts may stipulate specific work location requirements. Overall, this indicates a high level of resilience in this sector. This is enabled and dependent on a few key areas.

  - Strong Telecom Networks: Supported by a strong telecom network available everywhere and one that scales with demand
  - Hardware & Software: Laptops and Mobile equipped workforce that provides teams true enterprise mobility and an ability to support customers missions without disruption
  - ecurity: Education on leading practices and leveraging secure technologies and processes to allow the home to be an extension of the office, enabling employees to deliver consistently
- In cases where staff whose jobs duties qualify as essential activities pursuant to the Governor's Proclamation and Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency ("CISA") Guidelines, employees continue to work flexibly within the office but if possible, out of their homes, to maintain the operation of critical operations, and to continue to perform the information technology services for government customers.
- As Louisiana is moving into subsequent phases for re-opening the economy, IT industry workers in some cases may be returning to office environments while following public health guidelines, but in others, continue to work from home as many IT workers are able to do so with no significant impact to efficiency or effectiveness. It should be noted that there are many cases of IT companies across the U.S. that are putting out guidance related to continuing work from home patterns through September, October, and even suggesting permanent work from home policies. This is a strong indicator of the immediate resilience of many technology jobs from a work location perspective. In addition, this is also a strong indicator of IT workplace trends within the industry that presents an opportunity for Louisiana related to talent attraction initiatives discussed elsewhere in this document.
- State-based unemployment data related to technology sector jobs was not available to the Task Force as of the drafting of this document but national trends for unemployment in this sector are encouraging in that according to CompTIA, the leading trade association for the global IT industry, the "... unemployment rate for technology occupations fell to 3.7% in May, from 4.3% in April. In comparison, the national unemployment remains at a severely elevated rate at 13.3%."
- In a number of cases, IT service/consulting companies have been involved in several short term COVID-19 responses to help citizens and business. These surge efforts have varied in nature depending on the industry vertical they are supporting.
- In the IT consulting subsector, there is a growing impact, in some cases being felt in varying degrees based on the size of the IT consulting provider (as has been noted in some industry analyst reports) which requires attention. Employment challenges are occurring as a result of existing consulting projects that have been cancelled and/or the cancellation (or "pause") of upcoming projects. In larger IT consulting operations, employers may be able to shift across a broad number of industry or government sectors, potentially dulling this impact. This may not be possible for small to mid-size IT consulting firms, resulting in potential reductions in force.
- Louisiana has seen some job impacts in various sized IT companies in some geographies. Regional Economic Development and Louisiana Economic Development teams have been supporting efforts to absorb impacted IT

workers into other technology companies within the same region or across the state.

- A number of industry studies and reports are indicating that CxOs across many industry verticals are examining long term spending/investments related to IT in the wake of the pandemic. The impacts to technology investments are expected to vary based on a number of dynamics:
    - IT investments for planned digital transformation projects may be impacted within certain industry verticals.
    - Mission critical, "run the business" technology investments will be more resilient
    - Digital transformation efforts that were underway pre-COVID-19, which are mission critical and increase digital presence or represent increased value/reduced costs are continuing.
- Note that related to above, during the month of May, indicators associated with the above have started to show some rebalancing. For example 58% of all respondents to PWC's COVID-19 CFO Pulse Survey are considering pushing back or canceling planned investments. This is down from 70% from two weeks prior. While these are U.S. wide based trends, they are important to note as a portion of the IT sector workforce in Louisiana leverages Traded Services, supporting entities in other industry/government verticals outside of the state.

Which of the following financial actions is your company considering as a result of COVID-19?



Source: PwC COVID-19 US CFO Pulse Survey
April 8, 2020, base 313; April 22, 2020, base of 305; May 6, 2020; base of 288

- Results from this same PWC survey in the Industrial Products sector provide interesting insight into how CFOs are contemplating investment costs in technology, demonstrating an understanding of how automation and digital technologies can help companies weather this period. "At a time of extreme cost-cutting (73% of IP CFOs plan to cancel or defer investments), only 15% of IP CFOs are planning to cut digital transformation investments (e.g., automation, AI and the industrial IoT), and only 2% say they'll cut planned investments in cybersecurity and data privacy." The focus on digital/cybersecurity jobs and continued investment and resilience in this area is of interest given recommendations found in other sections of this document.
- Investment areas that are accelerating include a focus on cloud migration (and cloud infrastructure services generally), cybersecurity, business automation, specialized software, remote work infrastructure and services, etc.
- IT companies with diversified portfolios and client bases may have increased resilience as work shifts across industry verticals or from planned digital transformation activities towards scaling critical mission operations.
- Organizations are examining their IT workforce and manufacturing supply chains – and regional containment zones have created bottlenecks impacting value creation work streams.
- Widespread cancellations of tech conferences will negatively impact growth as the sector has relied heavily on these types of events for networking related to demand generation and business development.Industry reports from April indicate a range of impacts on hiring trends in the tech sector, with Glassdoor showing a decrease occurring from March to April but Indeed indicating a YoY increase in various geographies. Trends will need to be monitored to assess where there are resilient pockets across industry verticals or within various horizontals. From April to May national job openings in this sector remain strong but have seen some slippage. "New job postings for IT occupations…totaled more than 220,000 nationwide. Software and application developers are in highest demand, with an estimated 69,300 job postings. Companies are also seeking IT support specialists, systems engineers and architects, systems analysts and web developers."
- According to a recent Yello survey, 35% of students who've accepted summer internships learned the internship was canceled, and 24% of students have been told their internship will be virtual. This data was not broken down by industry sector but would be interesting to monitor and assess for the tech industry given the ability for the tech sector to support WFH arrangements.
- In some sectors, there is increased demand for "elastic workforces" that can work remotely and be scaled up and down quickly in response to demand.

Sources:

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https://go.forrester.com/blogs/new-forrester-forecast-showsglobal-tech-market-growth-will-slip-to-3-in-2020-and-2021/ (Pre COVID-19 forecasts for tech sector market growth)

Communications Assessment

- Teams are closely monitoring developments in the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and are taking the appropriate steps to help maintain the ongoing health and safety of its employees and customers. Communications providers remain fully committed to supporting its customers and the broader society during this challenging period.
- As a critical infrastructure provider and deemed essential business, communications providers have continued to operate as appropriate and as authorized by federal, state and local standards during the Stay at Home Order. This includes maintenance of existing network assets, deployment and construction of new network assets and telecom retail – all operating BAU. During this time, the safety of communications sector employees has been a top priority, while continuing to support this critical infrastructure sector.
- For employees that can, many are working from home. For those who are unable to work from home, communications providers have been providing personal protection protocols and equipment.
- Corporate operation (non-essential services) employees are working remotely and most corporate offices have been closed.
- Some providers have scaled back to a limited number of retail stores that have remained open, reduced operating hours, adopted measures to maximize touchless interactions and the use of PPE and additional sanitation measures to ensure the safety of employees and customers.
- Multiple communications providers in Louisiana have signed the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge in order to "...ensure that Americans do not lose their broadband or telephone connectivity as a result of these exceptional circumstances." Reference
- Companies are providing a number of emergency bandwidth upgrades to residential and government customers.
- CCOVID-19 has resulted in an increased demand for broadband and telecommunications services. More consumers need connectivity at their homes to support work from home and distance learning. In addition, more people being at home has contributed to rising broadband usage for delivery of over the top content. Lack of broadband in rural and in some urban environments has created challenges for telehealth, distance learning, and digital cutover for small businesses who lack connectivity or necessary skillsets.
    - Third party assessment of broadband demand spike
- Not all financial impacts are determinable at this time; however, communications providers are closely monitoring impacts to their customer base to assess near and long term trends.
- Providers are minimizing in-home installation work to critical scenarios in order to keep employees and customers safe and to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Every attempt is being made to perform work without going into homes or small businesses. New installs are limited to medical emergencies and critical installations. In some cases, this means that technicians will repair services up to where the service enters a consumer's location, and will then have to work with the consumer to troubleshoot and support self-repair on any required work inside a home or business.

- For employees who must deploy outside their homes to meet critical customer needs, some providers have implemented significantly enhanced compensation plans.
- In some cases, massive employee transition plans to re-train and re-deploy thousands of retail employees to work-from-home functions are underway.
- In some cases, comprehensive coronavirus leaves of absence policies have been implemented. One example:
    - Those who contract the virus are eligible for up to 26 weeks paid leave.
    - For employees caring for someone who's been infected, for employees directed to stay home due to an underlying medical condition and for employees who have trouble finding childcare at this time, 8 weeks of pay at full pay and, if needed, an additional six weeks with 60% of their base wage is being offered
- Providers have seen increased demand and are leveraging capabilities to conduct virtually any business transaction.
- Resources and capabilities for handling customer inquiries, sales and troubleshooting using online tools have been increased dramatically.
- The majority of communications providers' corporate-owned retail locations are now closed. A handful of employees continue to work from some offices due to the nature of their work, with procedures in place for social distancing, handwashing and sanitizing.
- Operating hours for retail stores that remain open have been reduced (and in some cases are now closed on Sundays).
- Networks continue to perform well. In areas where the coronavirus has had the biggest impact, fewer spikes are being observed in wireless usage around particular cell towers or particular times of day because more people are working from home rather than commuting to work and fewer people are gathering in large crowds at specific locations.
- Continuously monitoring bandwidth usage with tools that analyze and correlate network statistics, which reveal network trends, and provide performance and capacity reports that help manage networks.
- Self-healing architectures and restoration technologies are helping to maintain reliable networks
- Actively monitoring wireless voice and data traffic changes daily – flexible network capacity has been a key component to supporting customers throughout the pandemic thus far.
- Are there additional resources or information needed to help accelerate sector recovery? Specific to the Information Technology sub-sector of Louisiana, it would be useful to be able to have current and ongoing statistics related to IT jobs, unemployment statistics, and demographic data related to IT workers in the State. Demographic data will be especially useful as Louisiana looks to address Equity and Inclusion in Information Technology jobs. There is a known and well documented challenge in STEM fields related to demographics that are underrepresented in these careers. As we look to address this important issue for the state, baseline measures and targets will be critical. Please refer to the recommendations portion of this document for details on how some of this may be addressed.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

The ITC Task Force conducted an in-depth Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis for the Information Technology and Communications sub-sectors that address the topics suggested for consideration in this section. The following guidelines for each section of the SWOT Analysis were used by ITC Task Force members for this analysis ([1] Source for definitions is the U.S. Economic Development Administration

1. Strengths: are a region's relative competitive advantages (e.g., industry supply chains and clusters, extensive port, rail, and broadband assets, specialized workforce skills, higher education levels, collaboration among stakeholders) and often are internal in nature;
2. Weaknesses: are a region's relative competitive disadvantages (e.g., a risk-averse or change-resistant regional culture), also often internal in nature;
3. Opportunities: are chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress (e.g., expansion of a biosciences research lab in the region), often external in nature; and
4. Threats: are chances or occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline (e.g., several companies in the region considering moving to other states or offshore), also often are external in nature.

The results of the ITC Task Force SWOT Analysis is detailed below.
Strengths of the Information Technology and Communications Sector

- Strong foundation of large, midsize, and small IT employers across the state. Large IT providers with global presence in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Monroe, and New Orleans that provide high wage Traded Services (with industry vertical diversification that may strengthen resilience depending on the nature of disruptive forces). Vast majority of the IT sector workforce is able to WFH during crisis events.
- Significant cybersecurity assets through entities such as Cyber Innovation Center in Bossier, CESARS at Louisiana Tech Research Institute, UL Lafayette's Center for Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity, Louisiana Tech / LSU Center for Secure Cyberspace, University of New Orleans Cyber Center, and existing collaboration framework of the Louisiana Cybersecurity Commission.
- LED's Economic Development Incentive Programs (e.g. Digital Media) and LED Fast Start program are competitive/strategic differentiators for attracting software development related firms to Louisiana and enabling growth.
- Existing workforce development programs that pair LWC with the secondary education ecosystem are in place and patterns of collaboration with the IT sector have been established as it relates to talent acquisition, training (IWTP), etc.
- Research and Development assets across multiple Universities exist across the state that can be a part of P3 models that encourage innovation, R&D Tech Transfer, and commercialization of research to stimulate economic development. Specialized expertise in manufacturing, healthcare, energy, coastal preservation, and water management + University innovation partners + existing IT foundation are necessary forces of agglomeration.

- Louisiana Procurement and Technical Assistance Center (LA-PTAC) serves 54 of the 64 Louisiana parishes, and helps small businesses secure government contracts at the state and federal levels.
- Strong foundation of existing broadband providers/infrastructure that has proven to be highly resilient (e.g. in terms of expanded bandwidth capacity) during the pandemic. In addition to large telecommunication providers, other state-owned assets such as the Louisiana Optical Networking Initiative, DOTD fibers and dark fibers exist.
- Communications sector has a dedicated and well-seasoned workforce familiar with handling crisis events (e.g. hurricane, flood)

Weaknesses of the Information Technology and Communications Sector

- State and local governments do not have repeatable patterns for gathering common parties in supporting consistent supply / procurement behaviors to leverage the scale of Louisiana communities via common buying and providing vetted avenues to small businesses, local communities, and educational institutions. Consolidated purchasing power paired with Lowest Cost and Best Value procurement and buying behavior would increase transparency, competition, and reduce total costs.
- Level of education and awareness regarding the many ways to connect families and small businesses (wireless and fixed wireless, wireline, etc.) as well as topics such as required/needed download/ upload speeds for activities across residents and entities can be improved.
- Lack of adequate broadband access and adoption rates in rural and urban areas - this needs to be improved in order to enable future work, workplace, healthcare, education, etc. in a post-COVID context.
- Louisiana's economy is particularly susceptible to negative impacts of automation. For example, Louisiana ranks #1 (along with Oregon) on Oxford Economics vulnerability index where residents are most likely to lose their jobs to robots by 2030. This study did not include digital robotic automation. Reference
- Louisiana has never been able to fully take advantage of unlicensed fixed wireless due to foliage- low capital solution available in desert and plains is not available in Louisiana.
- In some cases, Federal (e.g. USDA) eligibility criteria are impacting ability to apply for and receive Federal funding. This should be examined in the context of CARES Act funding opportunities. This includes both the definition of what parts of the state are covered currently (5 Megabits per second (Mbps) download and 3 Mbps upload) as well as USDA's disposition that local governments may be prohibited from offering broadband service due to the Fair Competition Act (even though they technically are not)
- Within the IT Sector, university partners are providing high access to talent but mid to senior-level technology talent in highly skilled technology areas has supply constraints that may impact technology ecosystem growth.
- Low cost of doing business, while a driver for economic development (although more so in traditional manufacturing fields), is not the sole driver in tech fields (whereas innovation capacity is critical). Louisiana is ranked in the bottom 10 of national rankings of the States New Economy Index (SNEI) by ITIF.org and is 50th in Digital Economy score. Reference

- Recent studies in out-migration trends may indicate that knowledge workers are leaving for other geographies. Reference

Opportunities for the Information Technology and Communications Sector

- Multiple industry verticals within the U.S. have felt supply chain risks as a result of the pandemic. This applies to both material/manufacturing supply chains across industry verticals as well as IT Workforce Supply chains. Resulting reshoring or re-balancing of workforces due to risks experienced during COVID-19 may create workforce development/economic development opportunities.
- Supply Chain and Procurement opportunity: State and local governments could gather common parties in supporting consistent supply / procurement behaviors to leverage the scale of Louisiana communities via common buying (RFI, RFP, Quotations)/ providing vetted avenues to small businesses, local communities, and educational institutions. Lowest Cost and Best Value procurement and buying behavior should increase transparency, competition, and reduce total costs.
- Becoming a low cost of living talent attraction hub for tech workers. 78% of tech workers, in a recent study by CompTIA would relocate if they could "... citing affordability (60%) and the economy (56%)" in 2019. In a similar Citrix survey, of those surveyed, 85% said they could do their job as effectively from anywhere. This paired with forced awareness of WFH productivity in the tech sector may position Louisiana to attract a remote working tech workforce. Need to strengthen the levers that these individuals and entities look to for location options (Access to Talent, Quality of Life, etc.).

1. Reference. 2. Reference

- Modernization of proven/successful economic development incentive programs (e.g. DM and QJ) to recognize new IT related job creation areas in this subsector could attract additional growth as well as diversify types of IT jobs being incentivized by the state. This could include roles such as cybersecurity and other emerging technology fields.
    - Opportunity to enable modernized operating frameworks for flexible worksites and work from home within statewide incentive programs, will make Louisiana more competitive but also attractive to small, mid, and large businesses.
    - With regards to cybersecurity, nationally, from 2018-2019, there were 270,000 openings for Information Security Analysts (ISA), but only 112,000 workers. Median salary of an ISA for 2019 nationally was over $99K/year. Ref: Cyberseek.org (project is supported by the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE), a program of the National Institute of Standards and Technology in the U.S. Department of Commerce. Reference
- Identify ITC + Specialized Expertise ecosystem synergies (diversification of energy industry with O&G (e.g. wind), manufacturing, healthcare, coastal restoration and water management)
- Paired with above, and leveraging possible partnerships with global IT partnerships in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Monroe and New Orleans, create a Louisiana Procurement and Technical Assistance Center (LA-PTAC) partnership program to incubate small business growth to nurture "thicker" workforce

- Leveraging cybersecurity assets and Louisiana's Cybersecurity Strategic Plan, paired with CARES funding to create a talent pipeline and knowledge exchange infrastructure to position Louisiana as a cybersecurity talent hub for critical infrastructure and cyber-resiliency. Related to this, there is an opportunity now for the State to support and pursue long-term more sustainable jobs that are a derivative in the technology enablement space. This includes:
    - Critical Infrastructure that is enabled by Cloud / Hybrid / Multi-Cloud deployments
    - Cyber frameworks operated by Artificially Intelligent Robotics that are informed by robust data and analytics.
- Registered Apprenticeship programs in partnership with LWC + Industry can be used to support displaced workers, create new (and diverse/equitable talent pipelines).
- Potential for electric cooperatives (including rural co-ops) to help address the digital divide and foster economic opportunities for all Louisianans, given the growth of the gig-economy, telework, and the state's push for e-commerce opportunities for business and industry (from ECD document and BEL commission meeting)
- Developing a plan to promote broadband adoption (in the many places where it's available) yet the adoption rate is low will increase resiliency in some areas.
- Broadband for Everyone in Louisiana Commission and activities like the RLC will create a large volume of information regarding broadband in rural and urban areas that can be used to guide policy and inform residents of broadband options. Creating a clearinghouse for information sharing and exchange will empower communities and citizens.
    - Partnerships between electrical co-ops and providers to meet the needs for broadband in underserved areas.
- Gain economic advantages and disrupt traditional training delivery methods by leveraging Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) simulations in areas such as manufacturing and hands on related industries. This approach could be more economically sustainable in terms of making investments and training larger amounts of staff. This could also be aligned with attracting higher end "digital economy" jobs/companies in the VR/AR space.
- New and emerging funding options enable the creation of resilient workforce and infrastructure strategies. These include CARES Act funding as well as the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction.

Threats to the Information Technology and Communications Sector

- Small to mid-sized IT companies within the state may lack ability to weather current economic crises if trend in IT expenditures continues (especially in the Energy sector). Could lead to outmigration of tech talent from the state if national IT hiring trends (which have seen some decreased volumes) are reflected in IT hiring trends within the state.
- Second and third wave economic impacts may lead to a larger workforce displacement within the IT workforce that the state has invested heavily in attracting and creating.
- Uncertainty (decrease in or increased constraints on) existing economic development programs that are proven advantages to the state for recruiting IT/Communications companies to make a significant investment in the state (e.g. Digital Media)
- Near term fiscal constraints may result in lower IT investments, this lack of fiscal investment from Louisiana companies combined with the low cost of disruptive technology (Cloud, Robotics, Data and Analytics) could negatively affect the current and future competitive market positions of Louisiana companies. Technology investments are a greater equalizer and business enabler, but technical leadership and capacity is needed to support small businesses and communities in breaking through legacy cultural barriers and technology.
- One of the potential long-term workforce impacts of COVID-19 is that technology workers will have more options to "work from anywhere" and thus there is a possibility that some of the technology workforce built in Louisiana could be subject to out-migration.
- Automation and Artificial Intelligence may disrupt a large portion of the state's employed workforce
- Right of Way limitations related to railways may impact ability to implement Broadband in rural areas
- Permitting process to access the right-of-way near Railroads can be an impediment to broadband infrastructure deployment and thus impact expansion of services into underserved areas.
- Oil and petrochemical companies have assisted in driving telecom upgrades in Louisiana- slowdown in that sector potentially slows down continued telecom investment.
- As it relates to broadband access, availability, and adoption, generally more technology enabled states have a more sustainable ecosystem that is underpinned by similar workforce mix and supporting small and mid-size businesses that have allowed those states to fare better. Louisiana's challenges related to broadband could be a threat to future economic competitiveness and agglomeration forces associated with innovation economies.
- COVID-19 economic impact could affect ability of entities to participate in RDOF auction process

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19

Please refer to Section 1C of this document for the ITC recommendations for the timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options.
As for the final four questions regarding equity, the Information Technology and Communications Task Force recognizes that 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. As a result, topics related to equity are addressed across many of the recommendations that are found in this document. While the principles of equity should be a lens applied to every recommendation, we have noted recommendations most directly related to the RLC Equity Principles (and associated questions put forth by the RLC) with an asterisk next to the recommendation number in sections 1C and 1D.

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Please refer to Section 1D of this document for the ITC recommendations for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. As for the final four questions regarding equity, the Information Technology and Communications Task Force recognizes that 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. As a result, topics related to equity are addressed across many of the recommendations that are found in this document. While the principles of equity should be a lens applied to every recommendation, we have noted recommendations most directly related to the RLC Equity Principles (and associated questions put forth by the RLC) with an asterisk next to the recommendation number in sections 1C and 1D.

Financial Services, Insurance & Real Estate

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Financial Services, Insurance & Real Estate sectors were among the hardest hit industries due to the COVID-19 crises and resulting forced closure of Louisiana's businesses and public spaces. These industries will continue to be heavily impacted as we move from the Crises Response phase into the Long-Term Recovery & Resilience phase. It is important to have a strong recovery plan because it represents a huge sector of small business and jobs.
Creating and maintaining a strong small business community is the key to ensuring a successful near- and long-term reinvigoration of Louisiana's economy. Three main areas of focus were identified as cross-sector priorities: 1) Immediate and meaningful help, support and growth for Louisiana's small business community; 2) Creating greater liability protection for businesses against COVID-19 related claims; and 3) Housing affordability and protection for both tenants and landlords.

The Recovery Crisis phase is projected to last between 12-18 months. During that period, in collaboration with the federal government, the State of Louisiana must do whatever necessary to help its small businesses recover and rehire. Needed measures include forbearance to help in start-up costs, as well as short-term liquidity needs. For banking, that implies state and federal forbearance from traditional banking standards and waiving appraisal requirements. On the insurance front, state law must be modified to limit liability to small business and individuals related to COVID-19. For both property and health insurance, premium payment and subsidy programs need to be established to keep workers and properties insured. For real estate, most lenders have initiated short-term, 90- to 120-day loan payment programs for borrowers. Therefore, banks and regulators need to begin forming new rules for loan extensions and refinancing with terms more favorable to meet the short-term transition needs. State and local government must work in partnership to develop a property tax relief plan before tax due dates at the end of 2020 to avoid a rash of property tax delinquencies. Lastly, it is essential that state government and the regulatory community give the federal government feedback on federal relief programs developed to date and help craft the blueprint for the next round—smarter, wiser, and more efficient.

To ensure Long-Term Resilience, Louisiana should utilize this crisis as a wake-up call to finally develop comprehensive solutions for a sustainable tax and spending structure. Specific recommendations were put forth in a report issued in 2017 by The Task Force on Structural Changes in Budget and Tax Policy, but, after three years, not one of the suggestions has been adopted. A special session and a subsequent constitutional convention need to be called to address these

fundamental issues. The regulatory agencies at the state level for banking, insurance and real estate need to make permanent changes to their rules to adjust to the new norm we will live in post-COVID-19 while not burdening small businesses with unfunded mandates. The state needs to proactively develop a go-forward emergency plan for future pandemics or similar economic crises to ensure that we do not get caught unprepared again. Every action by state and local government should be required to raise the question: will this help or hurt getting our people back to work and small business in our state healthy again?

1A. Sector Impact Assessment

The Financial Services, Insurance and Real Estate sectors have been distinctly affected in that they were almost completely shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic. On the real estate front, hospitality and retail have taken the hardest hits, with the most extensive closures of any other sector. Hotel occupancies have gone from an average of 75-85% to 7-10%, while retail rent collections are down more than 60%. Banking has been on the front lines of the crises and has had to resort to extraordinary means to serve the people of Louisiana. The financial services sector will continue to be impacted as they face challenges relative to distressed properties and loan defaults with limited ability to work due to existing regulations. Banks, Regulators, and the Louisiana Bankers Association (LBA) must work together to develop solutions for a strong recovery. For the insurance sector, the pandemic has created significant risks and uncertain liabilities to the people and companies they serve, while health insurance has been burdened with the unfunded mandate of COVID-19 testing and treatment.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

Louisiana's economy is primarily a small business economy, accounting for 99% of all employers in the state and employing 53% of its private-sector workforce (Source: SBA.gov)—more citizens of Louisiana work for local, small businesses than any other employer. Small businesses and their workers are the quickest to suffer from mandatory closures and restrictions on the Financial Services, Insurance and Real Estate sectors, both economically and from a health perspective. These businesses and people depend upon successful shopping centers, real estate establishments, hotels, insurance providers and banks to survive and thrive. There are no isolated entities or sectors; all rely on each other to create and maintain a prosperous economy.

Additionally, dependence on retail sales tax and tourism in the economy makes not only industry sectors vulnerable but our cities and state. Combined with low oil prices, we consequently see a crippling of the trifecta that props up Louisiana's economy and a domino effect in the state's budget.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19

The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Most important strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Critical changes are necessary to the PPP loan program so the intended impact can be felt by more Louisiana business	Governor, LA legislative delegation	Federal funding	Increase the covered period from 8 to 24 weeks; extend the deadline for applying from June 30 to December 31, 2020; and allow for additional uses of the funds to aid in the re-start process.
2.	Improvements need-ed at the federal level to the $600 billion Main Street Lending Pro-gram (MSLP) to make it more attractive to small business owners and community banks. Areas of concern are restrictions on dividends, stock repurchases and limitations on compensation.	Congressional Delegation, The Governor, and LA legislature	Policy, funding	Drop "ineligible business" rule, it is not required by the CARES Act and the MSLP is not an SBA-administered pro-gram. Waive dividend prohibition for Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITS) so they can meet legal requirements under the Internal Revenue Code. This requirement was waived for other kinds of tax distributions in the April 30 guidance. Retail real estate businesses typically have higher debt to EBITDA ratios thanks to their traditionally predictable cash flow. The Fed should consider different metrics for these businesses, as it has indicated it might do for certain other businesses (such as asset-based borrowers). We recommend a minimum loan size of $100,000. Allow the maximum loan size for borrowers who own buildings placed in service after Jan. 2019 to be based on projected stabilized net operating in-come to reflect the long construction and lease-up times in retail real estate. While lowering the loan threshold to $500,000 to assist Main Street businesses/ small shop retail tenants with rent and other operating expenses, this amount remains unreasonably high for many small tenants.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
3.	Thus far, federal stimulus programs have excluded real estate ownership entities that hold properties in partnerships or limited liability corporations, entities that are not SBA eligible. It is important that the Governor work with his congressional delegation to include those entities, particularly for hospitality and retail properties which have been hardest hit in the crisis phase.	State government working with Congressional legislators	Policy, funding	Retail and hospitality—two industries most severely impacted and expecting the longest recovery—are significant contributors to Louisiana tax base. This is particularly problematic for Louisiana because our state—as well as its cities and parishes—is more vulnerable because we are more heavily dependent on retail sales taxes than other states. Annual retail real estate sales in La. surpass $85B and generate $4.6B per year in sales and property tax revenue.
4.	Banking regulations should allow more flexibility in a post- COVID-19 world. Banks and Regulators should work together for short- and long- term recovery solutions in the new norm.	Bank Regulators, LBA, Louisiana Delegation	Policy, governance	State banking regulatory officials, working with Louisiana Bankers Association and federal regulators, should monitor the health of small business, adjust rules as needed, and continue the flexibility with deferment and other loan restructure, thus reducing negative implications. We should also work with Regulators to help with developing rules for future rounds of funding that will assist business recovery in a post COVID world.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
5.	Limited COVID-19 liability, except in cases of gross negligence	Governor, LA legislature	Policy, legislation	Specific legislation needs to be passed at state and federal levels to address COVID-19 related liabilities to protect business and citizens of the state from liability if they are conforming to rules and regulations during the recovery crisis phase. Implement higher evidence standards for the recovery crisis phase.
6.	Expand programs to support small business through existing and new programs with community banks and provide loan guarantee support through LED's small business loan program. Design innovative opportunities to repurpose existing financial resources at the federal and state level to provide recovery to the business community collectively.	LED, Governor, LA Bankers, & LBA	Program	Create a committee comprised of banks, LBA, and LED to develop a loss reserve and loan guarantee, which could result in banks having greater participation with the LA banks during the Post COVID-19 time. The above-mentioned committee could also work to develop a program, such as a Toxic Loan Fund, using funds from federal and state funding sources, such as the Main Street Program by the Federal Reserve and the PPP by the U S Treasury Department. Such a fund would help stabilize the LA business economy by providing restructured loans, thus giving businesses more time to recover.
7.	Challenges with assessment and collection of 2020 property tax	LA legislature, parish assessors, parish presidents	Policy, procedures, funding	Develop a parish by parish tax relief program and guidance for property taxes due at the end of 202. The pro-gram should include both residential and commercial properties.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
8.	Extension of Louisiana State Historic Tax Credit program set to expire in 2021	A legislators	Policy, legislation	It's essential to attract and support real estate investment and development, particularly in the urban and historic areas of the state. From an ROI perspective, this has been one of the most productive tax credit pro-grams the state has ever implemented. It will help to jump start construction and real estate development in the state.
9.	Attempt to broaden definition and coverage of Opportunity Zone legislation	Governor, Congressional legislators	Policy	Needed to help restart the economy through construction, development and employment opportunities
10.	Advance coordinated, forward-thinking effort to encourage development of affordable and workforce housing that is critical to workforce needs of the state			Affordable and workforce housing is vital to the recovery in the post- pandemic period, particularly in the urban are-as of Louisiana. Assemble a workforce housing strategic planning committee to review current state pro-grams pertaining to affordable housing. The committee should coordinate with the federal programs to encourage development in this area. The proposed workforce housing strategic planning committee should also analyze the fiscal impact and feasibility of policy measures, such as tax abatements or deferrals, or other tools that address near-term challenges without adversely impacting local tax revenues. Such measures can aid landlords and property owners that are experiencing challenges with current rental markets due to the moratorium on evictions.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
11.	Compensation of property owners negatively impacted by the imposed moratorium on residential evictions	Governor, state legislators, particular representatives in affected parishes, parish presidents, mayors, city councils	Policy, funding	There is currently a moratorium on residential evictions through the end of Aug. 2020 in some parishes. If state and local governments feel this moratorium needs to be ex-tended, they must develop a plan to compensate property owners. This is equivalent to an unfunded mandate on private property owners that could create mortgage and property tax defaults. Possible solution: transferable and/or convertible tax credits to compensate landlords for keeping tenants in housing during eviction moratoria.
12.	Broad use of existing technology to improve electronic/online procedures			Amend state law to accept electronic and digital filings and recordings in the court system and with parish clerks of court. Physical filings are a health risk for people and a cumbersome burden during the recovery phase.
13.	For both property and health insurance, premium payment and subsidy programs need to be developed to keep workers and property insured.			Expanded use of the premium tax offset to facilitate late payments or temporarily subsidized premium payments. Legislative amendments to the existing residual market programs to provide excess insurance coverage on a stop loss or co-insurance basis.
14.	State government should work with private employers to provide incentives to keep COVID-19 infected workers employable while recovering.			LED legislative work with the insurance industry to strategize plans.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Most important strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	State Pandemic Response Plan in place, where we are not rewriting the book every time— leads to unified vision, coordination and messaging from the different cities/parishes, and various tiers of leadership in the state			Every city or parish leader has had their own set of rules, regulations, and timelines. In the future, should we experience a crisis like this, there should be a well thought out strategy with specific details on how to operate, a task force should be assembled and the messaging, timelines, and procedures should come from the Governor, with the mayors and parish leaders following the Governor's lead. The executive branch should have more power and influence in a disaster scenario such as this, especially as it relates to a pandemic, which takes longer to mitigate. Keeping the power in the hands of the local leaders certainly has better optics, but it has proven an ineffective way of informing the public and keeping them accountable. The state should also be responsible that personal protection equipment (PPE) is made available to commercial buildings reopening and testing is made readily available to citizens of the state.
2.	Positioning Louisiana to recruit and retain the employers and skilled workforce of the future	Government, Businesses	Program, Tools/ Processes	The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated systemic changes in all industries and workplaces, which will then factor into the future decisions of employers; LED needs futuristic thinking in how to best position our state relative to growth industries and training, such as technology, supply chain and logistics, healthcare expansion and accessing medical supplies/services
3.	Educational and ongoing discussion on how to market Louisiana and our state's future preparedness			We should educate and publicize our successful pandemic response efforts and our preparedness for future crises

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
4.	Tax Code recommendations need to change			The 3-legged stool of our state's budget (retail sales tax, tourism and oil dependency) only serves to expose our weakness and vulnerability; if we don't have the motivation and will to rectify now, when will we?
5.	Evolution of healthcare industry			Healthcare industry is evolving and adapting to meet the needs of the post-COVID-19 world; we need to continue providing security and peace of mind for employers and employees as they reopen and return to work; an example is Ochsner's Employer Solutions, offering comprehensive guidance and plans.

Food & Agriculture

Section 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Food and Agriculture Task Force brought together many leaders of the food, fiber, and agriculture sector. The impacts of COVID-19 on food and agriculture are highly visible and highlight the importance of the agriculture sector. The pandemic has brought attention to all that takes place before food and fiber products get to the grocery store.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a disruption to the food and fiber supply chain. Processing facilities in the state and around the United States had to close or scale back production due to lack of workers. The closure of restaurants, hotels, and schools have caused a drop on food and beverage demands, while at the same time there has been a surge in grocery store purchases with the public "panic buying" as they are forced to eat at home, often resulting in empty store shelves. The food and fiber supply chain has been tested. Having a stable and healthy workforce in the agriculture sector is vital to ensuring a stable supply of food and fiber.

As businesses reopen and resume operations, there is concern about possible legal liability concerning their employees or customers if they contract COVID-19. Tort reform is needed to be taken up legislatively to give businesses confidence to re-open without worrying about lawsuits. Moreover, with an ever-increasing litigious climate, efforts must be made to reduce frivolous lawsuits. Louisiana must be more attractive to business for them to want to invest in the state.

The pandemic has also brought to the forefront numerous issues for resilience in the food and agriculture sector, including the need for broadband internet access, workforce training targeted toward agriculture, increasing interest in pursuing agricultural education, heightened awareness of the benefits of Future Farmers of America (FFA), reforming the H-2A/B programs, the need for additional markets for agricultural products, the high cost of insurance, ensuring the availability of healthy foods in communities with food deserts, maintaining agricultural tax credits, ensuring agricultural programmatic funding, and investment in infrastructure (roads, bridges, ports, rail, etc.).

Recommendations within COVID
(timeline where COVID is still present with no vaccine or treatment options)

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	There must be a stable, healthy workforce available to work on the farms and processing facilities.	Businesses, Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation	As several processing facilities scale back due to sick workers, a wide-spread testing protocol in this critical sector is necessary to ensure healthy workers and a stable supply of food. Businesses must have their "finger on the pulse" of their workforce to ensure they are not coming into processing facilities and spreading the virus. Testing of these workers, along with employers incorporating appropriate CDC and OSHA guidance to reduce the risk of worksite spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, including through disinfection, distancing, barriers, and masks, will ensure they are able to work and keep the plants open and the supply chain in motion.
2.	Tort reform/ current crisis legal liabilities	Businesses, Government	Policy/ Legislation	As they reopen and resume operations, businesses are concerned about possible legal liability regarding their employees or customers if they contract COVID-19. This is important to give businesses confidence to re-open without worrying about lawsuits. With an ever-increasing litigious climate, efforts must be made to reduce frivolous lawsuits. Louisiana must be more attractive to business for them to want to invest in the state.

Post-COVID recommendations (strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events)

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Broadband access	Businesses, Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Funding	As many people have been forced to stay at home, they must continue working, educating, etc. Many aspects of agriculture production involve the use of technology, which requires broadband access. (Precision agriculture technology and modern farm equipment require high-speed internet access.) Agricultural businesses looking to locate in rural areas of the state are hindered by a lack of broadband access. Funding is available through USDA Rural Development for projects in the state. Broadband needs to spread out through rural utility companies.
2.	Workforce Development and Training	Residents, Businesses, Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Funding	There needs to be funding to training workers and for apprenticeships. Need to reach students at an earlier age in getting them prepared and ready to enter the workplace. Agriculture needs to be a bigger piece of the industries that the Louisiana Workforce Commission serves with more engagement by the office and its programs with the agriculture sector. There needs to be more public awareness about the varied jobs and skills needed in agriculture, and changing the perception that agriculture related jobs are not high tech. Develop workforce development programs for workforce development aimed at low-income areas and minorities.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
3.	Agricultural education	Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation	Young people need to understand what modern agriculture is in 2020 and get them interested in pursuing agriculture careers and studies such as Ag business, agricultural and environmental sciences, etc. Not all students will go to college, so efforts must be made to get those students interested in shops, mechanics, etc. which are needed in the agriculture sector. There must be opportunities for everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, to go to college or participate in programs to develop job skills to prepare them for careers.
4.	FFA (Future Farmers of America)	Residents, Government	Program, Policy/Legislation, Funding	FFA needs to be more prevalent in schools. FFA is a progressive organization that prepares students for college as well as the workforce through cutting-edge career and technical education paired with leadership development. In a recent study on workforce preparedness for high school students, it revealed that for every agricultural science/industry training course taken, a student would increase his/her salary by $1,500 making the importance of these courses for career development critical. All state superintendents need to understand the importance of FFA and how it benefits youth and agriculture. (Note: information on FFA was sent to all superintendents)
5.	The H-2A/B programs must be less cumbersome	Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Funding	Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and seafood industries rely on H-2A/B labor to meet their workforce needs. Domestic workers for related jobs are hard to find as they do not want the types of jobs in these industries. The process of hiring workers from outside the United States is often very cumbersome and needs to be reformed and streamlined.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
6.	Additional markets for agricultural products	Businesses, Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Funding	Increased markets will bring forth new sources for products to be sold to, including new global markets. Enhance and grow the Certified Louisiana program to promote Louisiana made, grown, manufactured, or processed products. The Certified Louisiana program needs to be funded at an appropriate level to aggressively market Louisiana products. One idea mentioned in a Task Force meeting is that the state needs to be encouraged to use wood in construction projects.
7.	High cost of insurance	Businesses, Government	Policy/Legislation	The cost of insurance for all agriculture activities is extremely high. One example is the high cost of insurance for trucks delivering agricultural products. Louisiana must work on this to ensure economic viability for businesses to operate.
8.	Food deserts	Businesses, Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation	There is an opportunity to enhance vegetable and fruit farming and also help disparities in communities that have food deserts. In food deserts, there is limited access to nutritious and affordable food, which has negative health consequences. The Task Force discussed 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.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
9.	Agricultural tax benefits	Businesses, Government	Policy/ Legislation	There are numerous tax benefits available in the state and includes sales tax exemptions for farm agricultural inputs (fuel, feed, seed, parts, lubricants, fertilizer, livestock pharmaceuticals). Producers rely on these and are a major component of their economic viability. The legislature must keep these in place.
10.	Agricultural programmatic funding	Residents, Businesses, Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation	The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry is the largest regulatory agency in the state and oversees many programs to promote, protect, and advance agriculture and forestry. The department relies on self-generated fees and general fund dollars. The legislature needs to ensure that the department's funding does not decrease and its statutory dedicated funds are not "swept" for general government purposes. The budgets for the AgCenters in the state have been cut over the years and cannot sustain any further cuts. From researching new varieties of crops to providing parish level extension services, our AgCenters provide critical research and extension to Louisiana's agricultural industries.
11.	Infrastructure	Businesses, Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation	The state must invest in infrastructure (roads, bridges, rail, ports, etc.) for business to locate and thrive. Infrastructure investment in rural areas is essential to moving products from farm to market. Better infrastructure allows products to move more efficiently. New Orleans Cold Storage expansion is an opportunity for state/private investment that will reduce cost and increase efficiency for Louisiana poultry and seafood industries, as well as bring additional poultry, pork and beef business from neighboring states that might otherwise go to East Coast ports, West Coast ports, Mobile, or Houston

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
12.	Enhanced funding for programs through the Southern University AgCenter to get minorities interested in careers in the food and agriculture sector	Residents, Businesses, Government	Program, Policy/ Legislation, Funding	According to the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture, 48,697 agricultural producers identified as black, accounting for 1.4% of the country's 3.4 million producers. In Louisiana, 3,222 of the state's 43,798 of producers are black. The Southern University AgCenter needs enhanced funding to expand programs aimed at increasing the number of minority farmers in the state and to increase interest of minorities in careers in the food, fiber, and agriculture sector.

Section 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

Though challenged, the Food and Agriculture sector remains strong. This sector has been consistently challenged by commodity price fluctuations, weather events, trade disputes, and many other issues over the years. Deemed "critical infrastructure", this sector is vital to ensuring that Americans have a safe and abundant supply of food and fiber available. According to the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, this sector is almost entirely under private ownership and is composed of an estimated 2.1 million farms, 935,000 restaurants, and more than 200,000 registered food and fiber manufacturing, processing, and storage facilities. It accounts for nearly 20% of the economic activity within the United States.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light several issues and long-term recommendations for economic resilience. While immediate action items were discussed to deal with the immediate threat caused by COVID-19, the Task Force spent considerably more time focused on issues that must be addressed for sector resiliency.

The most significant issue the COVID-19 pandemic caused is the disruption to the food and fiber supply chain. Processing facilities in the state and around the United States had to close or scale back production due to lack of workers. The closure of restaurants, hotels, and schools caused a drop-in food and beverage demands, while at the same time there was a surge in grocery store purchases with the public "panic buying", often resulting in empty store shelves. While the food and fiber supply chain has been tested, it is no doubt rebounding, with grocery shelves being restocked. What this event has pointed out is that having a stable and healthy workforce in the agriculture sector is vital to ensuring a stable supply of food and fiber. As part of this, the Task Force recommends that there be more testing available to workers across the food supply chain to ensure they are not entering the workplace, whether it be a processing facility or a farm, and spreading the virus. This, along with ensuring that the CDC and OSHA guidance for workers and employers is strictly followed, are critical for maintaining the food and fiber supply chain. Testing alone is not enough

to keep workers healthy. Employers must incorporate appropriate CDC and OSHA guidance to reduce the risk of worksite spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, including through disinfection, distancing, barriers, and masks.

As businesses reopen and resume operations, there is concern about possible legal liability concerning their employees or customers if they contract COVID-19. Tort reform is needed to be taken legislatively to give businesses confidence to re-open without worrying about lawsuits. Moreover, with an ever-increasing litigious climate, efforts must be made to reduce frivolous lawsuits. Further, Louisiana must be more attractive to business for them to want to invest in the state.

Despite these problems, there were successes along the way in terms of adapting to the rules of social distancing and slowing the spread of the virus. A recent article in 225 Magazine highlighted how farmers markets and grocery stores were able to still get food to customers during the pandemic. From drive-thru service at farmers markets to curbside pickup of groceries, farmers were able to get their products to consumers and the most vulnerable citizens could get their groceries safely.

Turning to charge 2 (long-term resilience) of the Task Force, the pandemic has also brought to the forefront much discussion for economic resilience in the Food and Agriculture Sector, including the need for broadband internet access, funding for workforce training and programs targeted toward agriculture, increasing interest in pursuing agricultural education, heightened awareness of the benefits of Future Farmers of America (FFA), reforming the H-2A/B programs, the need for additional markets for agricultural products, the high cost of insurance, ensuring the availability of healthy foods in communities with food deserts, maintaining agricultural tax credits, ensuring agricultural programmatic funding, and investment in infrastructure (roads, bridges, ports, rail, etc.).

The lack of broadband access in rural Louisiana is a major challenge. Many aspects of agriculture involve the use of technology, which requires broadband access. Precision agriculture technology and modern farm equipment require high-speed internet access. Broadband access is not unique to the agriculture sector and impacts all sectors of the economy. We are in a unique period of time. With funding already available before COVID-19 through USDA Rural Development, and the problem of lack of access coming to the forefront as people stayed home during the pandemic, now is the time to finally address and correct this problem that has been discussed for far too long.

The Task Force had lengthy discussions on workforce development and training. The Task Force identified that there needs to be funding to workers and for apprenticeships; students need to be reached at an earlier age to get them ready to enter the workplace; agriculture needs to be a bigger piece of the industries that the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) serves with more engagement by the office and its programs with the agriculture sector; workforce development programs must be developed that are for aimed at low-income areas and minorities; and there needs to be more public awareness about the varied jobs and skills needed in agriculture and changing the perception that agriculture related jobs are not high-tech. In these discussions, the Task Force highlighted the importance of the H-2A/B programs as local workers do not apply for sector related jobs.

Mr. Harlen Henegar, Director of Field Operations at Louisiana Workforce Commission/ Office of Workforce Development, participated in the May 19 meeting of the Task Force. Mr. Henegar informed the Task Force that he recently assigned a staff member to be the agriculture sector coordinator. This is a great first step to ensuring that agriculture is represented and a part of the programs available under LWC to help with training and retraining workers to meet current and future labor needs.

Agriculture in the 21st Century is high-tech. Any perception to the contrary must be changed. Young people need to understand what modern agriculture is in 2020 and get them interested in pursuing agriculture careers and studies such as ag business, forestry, agricultural and environmental sciences, etc. Understanding that not all students will go to college, there must be more robust efforts made to get those students interested in shop, mechanics, etc. which are needed in the food and agriculture sectors.

As part of this, Future Farmers of America (FFA) needs to be more prevalent in schools. FFA is a progressive organization that prepares students for college as well as the workforce through cutting-edge career and technical education paired with leadership development. In a recent study on workforce preparedness for high school students, it revealed that for every agricultural science/industry training course taken, a student would increase his/her salary by $1,500 making the importance of these courses for career development critical. All state superintendents need to understand the importance of FFA and how it benefits youth and agriculture. A letter from Commissioner Strain and Dr. Bill Richardson, LSU AgCenter Vice President for Agriculture, was sent to all superintendents on May 26 with a copy of the Louisiana FFA Association Impact Report. The letter requested all superintendents to review and share the information with their faculty and consider adding or expanding agriculture science and industry training courses to their curriculum.

The H-2A/B programs are critical to the Food and Agriculture sector. Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and seafood industries rely on H-2A/B labor to meet their workforce needs. Domestic workers for related jobs are hard to find as they do not want the types of jobs in these industries. Ideally, domestic workers would fill these jobs. This is not unique to Louisiana. As such, seasonal or temporary labor is vital to filling employment gaps by hiring workers from other countries. The H-2A/B programs are unworkable and cumbersome, and involve much “red tape”. The process of hiring workers from outside the United States needs to be reformed and streamlined. This must be done at the federal level. A possible solution includes an “at-will” visa where employees do not have contractual commitments and can move between employers as seasons and labor demands change. In the end, industry needs a workable framework that provides for a legal, reliable workforce.

Another avenue for resilience is the need for additional markets for agricultural products. This can be in many forms, including increased trade opportunities through opening of markets across the globe or enhanced marketing of Certified Louisiana products. The Certified Louisiana, Certified Cajun, Certified Creole, Certified Craft Beverage and Certified Farm to Table logo program was established by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to promote Louisiana made, grown, manufactured or processed products that are aimed at enhancing and promoting Louisiana’s agricultural industry. It is important to note that this program does not

receive any state general funds. There is much potential with this program and growing it will help Louisiana highlight and market all that is unique about Louisiana food and agricultural products. The only way to do this is to invest into it and fund it at an appropriate level. The investment of state general funds into the program will allow the department to reach untapped markets and aggressively promote Louisiana products. Additionally, during discussions on the need for additional markets, Mr. Buck Vandersteen, Executive Director of the Louisiana Forestry Association, recommended that the state be encouraged to utilize more wood in state construction projects. There are numerous economic and environmental benefits using wood. Forests cover 45% of Louisiana’s land area and produce and abundance of trees for use in construction projects as well as personal consumer products.

The high cost of auto insurance has been a hot topic at the state capitol recently. It is well known that Louisiana ranks among the highest in the United States for auto and commercial insurance rates. The Food and Agriculture sector relies heavily on modes of transportation to move products. The cost of insurance for trucks hauling raw agricultural products is a major concern that must be dealt with to ensure the economic viability for businesses to operate. Businesses simply cannot afford to keep paying these high insurance costs. Without these trucking businesses, the movement of products becomes more difficult. Moreover, these insurance costs are passed on to consumers in the form of higher costs of food and fiber.

The USDA Economic Research Service defines a food desert as a low-income Census tract where a substantial number or share of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store. In food deserts, there is limited access to nutritious and affordable food. Thus, lack of healthy foods has negative health consequences. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, 15.8% of Louisiana households experienced food insecurity between 2016 and 2018, one of the highest rates in the nation. Moreover, data in recent weeks has revealed disparate impacts of COVID-19 on people of color. Focusing on the availability of nutritious and affordable food is critical in the battle against COVID-19. The Task Force believes that there is an opportunity to enhance vegetable and fruit farming and also help disparities in communities that have food deserts. The Task Force discussed 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.

Louisiana producers benefit from several agricultural and forestry state sales tax exemptions There are several sales tax exemptions available in the state and includes sales tax exemptions for such purchases as fuel, feed, seed, fertilizer, pesticides, livestock pharmaceuticals, and qualifying machinery or equipment, fuses, belts, wires, conveyor belts, lubricants, etc. Producers, loggers, paper and wood manufactures all benefit from these and are a major component of their profitability. As the crawfish industry is struggling due to loss of sales in the restaurants, for example, the sales tax exemption crawfish farmers received for the purchase of bait, feed, supplies, or equipment is vital to keeping them in business. This is just one example, but it is critical, not only during these times, but at other times as well to maintain these exemptions to keep our farmers and industry in business. The legislature must keep these in place.

The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) is responsible for administering many of the programs and enforcing the regulations that impact every aspect of the state's agriculture and forestry industry. At the farm and forest level, these industries contribute $13 billion annually to the state's economy. When the many support industries are added in, agriculture and forestry touch the lives of everyone in Louisiana, making them critical to the economic growth and prosperity of the state as well as a vital part of our rich cultural heritage. Thus, the LDAF is the largest regulatory agency in the state and oversees many programs to promote, protect, and advance agriculture and forestry. Specific programs include the pesticide program, seed program, weights and measures program, forestry firefighting, crop pest and disease program, animal health and food safety programs, just to name a few. The department relies on self-generated fees and general fund dollars for its funding. In order to keep Louisiana agriculture moving forward, it is critical that the legislature ensure that the department's funding does not decrease and its statutory dedicated funds are not "swept" for general government purposes. Many different industries in agriculture pay fees that are dedicated to administer programs. This revenue is expected by these industries to not be used for any other purpose other than what they are specifically dedicated to.

Additionally, the budgets for the LSU AgCenter and the Southern University AgCenter have been cut drastically over the years. From researching new varieties of crops to providing parish level extension services, they provide critical research and extension to Louisiana's agricultural industries. As the world population is expanding, the demand for food and fiber production also increases. Food production must double by 2050 to meet this demand. Thus, research is critical to agriculture as producers rely on scientists to develop new knowledge and technology to supply food, fiber, and fuel. Moreover, extension allows for the latest research-based information to be delivered to all Louisiana citizens. Extensions efforts support sustainable agriculture production, environmental awareness, and improved quality of life. These programs are crucial for Louisiana producers and any efforts at further budget reductions will cripple their ability to provide these vital services.

The state must invest in infrastructure (roads, bridges, rail, ports, etc.) for business to locate and thrive, and to effectively and efficiently move products to markets. Investment in rural infrastructure is critical to the agriculture and forestry industries and the economic viability of rural communities.

One such investment is the opportunity to expand New Orleans Cold Storage at the Port of New Orleans. Devastated by hurricane Katrina and the closure of the MRGO canal, NOCS was rebuilt and expanded both at the original sight at Jourdan Road and a new facility at Henry Clay Ave. Founded in 1886, is the oldest cold storage company in North America. The company is one of the largest suppliers to poultry exporters in the country and operates facilities with more than 17 million cubic feet of refrigerated space in New Orleans, Houston and Charleston, South Carolina. NOCS is planning a major expansion with state/private monies to include a 133,750 square foot expansion of blast-freeze and cold storage warehouse space at Jourdan Road Terminal. These are the types of projects that grow and expand commerce. This project will reduce cost and increase efficiency for Louisiana poultry and seafood industries, as well as bring additional poultry, pork and beef business from neighboring states that might otherwise go to East Coast ports, West Coast ports, Mobile, or Houston.

According to the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture, 48,697 agricultural producers identified as black, accounting for 1.4% of the country's 3.4 million producers. In Louisiana, 3,222 of the state's 43,798 of producers are black. The Southern University AgCenter needs enhanced funding to expand programs aimed at increasing the number of minority farmers in the state. Not only should efforts be made to increase the number of minority farmers, but there must be a targeted focus on getting information on funding opportunities to expand their operations and ensure they are able to stay in business.

Additionally, there needs to be funding for programs that actively recruit minorities into the food, fiber, and agriculture sector.

Manufacturing

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
The manufacturing sector has been fortunately designated critical infrastructure, allowing operations to continue for most businesses throughout the health emergency. However, market economics have changed, compounding the impacts of the pandemic. There is uncertainty as businesses prepare for the remainder of 2020.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
Companies in the sector continue to see vulnerabilities in the following areas: workforce, state and local taxes, legal liability protection and infrastructure. All of these items could put ongoing and future investment activity in jeopardy. Unknowns such as employees' personal health and caretaker responsibilities along with the uncertainty of fiscal policy as state and local governments face revenue shortages are areas for possible concern.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Childcare for employees	State Govt./Dept. of Education	Consistent guidance for school districts	Flexibility for parents/guardians when implementing nontraditional learning options. Have a path for before-care and after-care programs to continue or be established.
2.	CISA Designation	State Govt.	Adhere to existing CISA Guidelines	Maintain the CISA essential worker designation and identification/credential protocols to maintain in continuity and minimal disruption for these employees through hurricane season.
3.	Workplace	Manufacturers	Create a safe, healthy workplace	Adhere to CDC guidance for workplace health and safety. Exercise flexibility when managing employees and special circumstances. (i.e. high-risk conditions of workforce, caregivers).

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
4.	Unemployment Benefits	Federal & State Govt., Employers	Return to work in place of unemployment	The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program that ends on July 31, 2020 and state unemployment benefits should not encourage workers to not return to work. The Louisiana Workforce Commission and businesses should adhere to existing processes for able workers choosing not to return to their position when offered that opportunity.
5.	Liability Protections	State Govt.	Adapt as conditions change	Continue to review laws that provide COVID-19 related liability protections for businesses and organizations. 2020 Regular Session - HB 826 is a good start. Future amendments may be needed as the emergency pandemic response evolves.
6.	Industry Specific COVID-19 data	LDH	Produce usable data for manufacturers to combat COVID-19	Statewide Public Health Monitor designated (LDH representative) AND/OR publicly available dashboard to track and monitor COVID-19 cases and deaths from people who are employees in manufacturing. Drill down in data to understand impacts by race/ethnicity, underlying health conditions, and other data that we deem necessary for understanding who's impacted. Data should be available for all industry sectors. No individual sectors should be presented unless all are presented.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Workforce	State Govt.	Evaluation and adapting to maintain and expand the workforce needed for Louisiana manufacturers.	Workforce Commission should immediately begin to study impacts of COVID-19 on existing and future workforce. (Collaborate with LCTCS and LA universities) Offer LED FastStart training support to former participants in the program, understanding that some businesses may need to reboot and change direction given economic realities.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
2.	Regulations	State Govt.	Codify regulatory changes made to assist CISA designated Louisiana businesses	Maintain and/or increase funding of SBET (Small Business Employee Training) for adult continuing skills and education to advance their knowledge and their earning power through their employer. Create incentive-based program for adults to receive skill-based certifications via schools or employers. Tax credits for employers valued at the employment cost of a disadvantaged worker. Creates a low risk incentive for the employer.
3.	Business Development	State Govt./Local Govt.	Use of programs, credits, etc. to spur economic activity	Instruct regulatory agencies (DEQ, DNR, etc.) to create a pandemic play-book that supports businesses that choose to "work from home." Revisit ITEP changes to allow Miscellaneous Capital Additions for a temporary period (i.e. 2 years) Make Modernization Tax Credit available for any manufacturer that must retool to remain competitive. Offer the Economic Development Award Program (EDAP) for new investments in the state. Support the SIMPLE proposal in HB 23 & HB 28 by Dwight Use R&D Tax Credit to encourage current manufacturers to innovate. Encourage manufacturers to source and use local/smaller businesses when doing business in Louisiana. MM&E exemption for manufacturers should is a valuable tool.

Restaurants & Entertainment

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

The health and safety of our community is the fundamental concern when considering the reopening of our stadiums and arenas for sports and entertainment. Safeguarding the health of employees, participants and attendees must be assured prior to any reopening of these facilities.

Sports and entertainment are ingrained in the fabric of the culture of Louisiana. Ultimately, the reopening of our venues is critical to our recovery, as they serve as iconic anchors for our cultural economy. Sporting events, festivals and concerts of all sizes at our venues attract millions of tourists and locals alike, sustain businesses of all sizes, and create local jobs. Louisiana's venues are vital community centerpieces in every corner of our state, serving as job centers for the celebration of sports, music, art, food, history, and Louisiana culture. Our venues and events are our most high-profile barometers of recovery, hope, and progress.

1A. Sector Impact Assessment

Through the events they host, Louisiana's venues generate billions in economic activity and hundreds of millions in taxes annually for the State of Louisiana. Economic losses have never been more evident than this spring, which witnessed the suspension of the NBA and cancellation of the NCAA Women's Final Four, the Zurich Classic, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, Festival International de Louisiane, Essence Festival, concerts and numerous other entertainment, professional, collegiate, amateur and recreational events throughout the state. The NCAA Women's Final Four alone would have generated an estimated $50M in economic impact over a four-day period.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

Venues operating at any reduced capacity this fall would result in severe financial losses across the State. Professional and/or college football regular seasons, annual major sporting events, three NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) Bowl Games, the Bayou Classic, the LHSAA Football State Championships, festivals, road shows, concerts, and other bookings are critical job and revenue generators for multiple stakeholders, including the venues themselves. As broadcast beacons of tourism, the additional PR value of televised, streamed and digital broadcast events from our venues showcase, reinforce our reputation as a fan favorite destination, and represent an opportunity loss that simply cannot be measured or replaced.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Facility Environmental Hygiene	Patrons, Employees, Event staff	Tools/Processes	All stadiums and arenas should conduct a thorough sanitizing of all areas and equipment with appropriate antimicrobial cleaning disinfectants prior to reopening. This standard should be maintained at all times. All facilities should increase the frequency of cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting of high traffic areas such as seating areas, restrooms, escalators, stairways and rails, concession areas, retail areas, etc. Appropriate cleaning methods and sanitizing/disinfecting products must be employed along with enhanced staff training to ensure cleanliness. Touchless hand sanitizer, hand washing stations and other cleaning supplies (disinfectant wipes, etc,) should be readily accessible to all patrons and employees throughout the facility. These areas should be consistently monitored to ensure they are adequately supplied. In indoor facilities and enclosed areas, consider replacing HVAC air filters and disinfect all ventilation and equipment.
2.	Employee Protocols & Policies	Employees	Tools/Processes	Prior to returning to work, all employees should undergo screening to assess whether they may be at higher risk of complications from COVID-19. If an employee is determined to be at higher risk, this should be considered when determining job responsibilities and interaction with patrons and other employees. Employees should have their temperature checked by use of a touchless infrared thermometer (or similar equipment) prior to entering the facility each day. Should the employee's temperature exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit they should be sent home. Employees may not enter the facility until they have no fever and/or other symptoms of COVID-19 illness. The screening and admittance of employees should be made with appropriate physical distancing between employees. In addition to temperature checks, it may be recommended that higher risk employees should receive respiratory system checks as deter-mined by healthcare professionals. Employees must notify their employer immediately upon testing positive for COVID-19. Should any employee display signs of COVID-19 illness in the work-force they should be immediately isolated and sent home. Employees and managers should receive training in how to identify symptoms of COVID-19 and the importance of self-reporting these symptoms or recognizing them in others. Employees should practice the highest standards in personal hygiene and receive training on best hygiene practices and etiquette. Increased use of signage in break rooms, etc. should be displayed to remind employees to practice appropriate hygiene methods, including the proper way to wear, handle and dispose of PPE. All employees should wear a mask when being exposed to other employees or patrons. Use of personal protective equipment worn by employees, including gloves and masks, should be determined by role and responsibility. Proper PPE (gloves, masks, face shields, etc.) should be made available to employees, as appropriate, along with providing proper training in their use. Whenever possible (based on job responsibilities), employees should engage in proper social distancing. Employees should receive proper training into how to interact with patrons at all times including facilitating social distancing, tickets scanning, security screenings, etc.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
3.	Concession & Retail Protocols and Procedures	Employees, Event staff, Vendors	Tools/Processes	It is recommended that all transactions should be cashless and, whenever possible, contactless. Accommodations should be made for patrons without access to cards (self-service conversion kiosks, etc.) if a cashless system is adopted. The number of employees allowed simultaneously in break rooms should be limited and monitored to ensure compliance with policy. Access to concession areas and queuing should be governed by social distancing guidelines (including servicing areas). It is recommended that packaging (including condiments, cutlery, etc.) should be single serve, where appropriate. All concession and retail areas should be frequently cleaned and sanitized throughout the event. It is recommended that transactions (concessions and other retail) within the facility should be "cashless" and conducted without contacting an employee, when possible.
4.	Patrons Protocols & Procedures	Patrons	Tools/Processes	The number of patrons admitted to the facility will be determined with health and safety of the public, employees and participants the primary consideration. Venues and events should work together to provide a "contactless" experience whenever possible for the protection of patrons and employees. It is recommended that all ticketing should be paperless via mobile applications. Patrons should be able to scan their own ticket with-out their mobile ticket being touched by employees. Enhanced technology solutions should be employed, where possible, to re-duce person-to-person interaction. It is recommended that patrons should have temperature checks where possible, by use of a touch-less infrared thermometer (or similar equipment) prior to entering the facility and should be done so in a climate-controlled environment. Should the patron's temperature exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit they should be removed for enhanced screening or refused entry. It may be appropriate to encourage patrons to wear masks while inside the venue (these may be removed briefly for consumption of food and beverage). Patrons will be encouraged to bring their own PPE, but venues may choose to provide (free or for a charge) masks and/or other PPE. Occupancy limits may be established in meeting rooms and retail spaces to promote physical distancing. All patron entry, exits queuing and movement should be conducted with safe social distancing standards. Venues should take steps to assist in these efforts by installing physical cues and reminders (floor tape, signage, etc.). Seating configuration and available seats should be determined to en-sure proper social distancing be-tween individuals or associated groups of individuals. The standard of distancing should be flexible and determined by the prevailing health and safety guidance at the time of the event. Special accommodations may be made for higher risk patrons. Patrons or groups who do not ad-here to venue health and safety requirements may be removed.
5.	Patrons Protocols & Procedures	Events, Leagues, Businesses	Tools/Processes	Individual events, leagues and businesses using the facilities should establish appropriate protocols for testing, screening and monitoring the health of its participants and establishing guidelines for their employees' participation in games or performances. Facilities and participants should establish appropriate protocols to avoid close interaction or contact with patrons and employees.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Continued Hygiene Protocol Training	All venue staff (full and part time)	Tools/processes	Ensure proper hygiene and safety protocols become part of standard employee training to better safeguard the health of all employees and patrons.
2.	Attendee Education	Patrons	Tools/process	Employ signage and other strategies to remind patrons of best hygiene practices to protect themselves, fellow patrons and venue employees.
3.	Infrastructure Planning and Implementation	Venues	Tools/process, Funding	Include infrastructure investments necessary for safer patron/staff safety in long-term planning (Wi-Fi upgrades for paperless tickets, cashless transactions, etc.)

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment Please see Section 1A. & 1B. Above

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

Stadiums and arenas are particularly vulnerable because they often host events that have the highest number of people in close physical proximity. These individuals often travel from many different cities, regions and states and are susceptible to exposing, or being exposed, to potential viruses. In addition to patrons of venues, employees and staff of the venues commonly come into close physical contact with each other and venue patrons.

During this current pandemic, another challenge is that many of the part time and other employees necessary to host events are categorized as being at higher risk of negative impacts of COVID. Determining how to best protect these vulnerable employees is a significant consideration when planning for reopening and continuing operations.

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19

Much, if not all, of the training, hygiene and other policies should continue to be employed during Phase 2. What is critical to the industry is to find ways in which as many patrons as possible can safely access a venue during an event. A limiter to industry recovery may be the amount of separation being recommended between individuals or groups of individuals, especially when combined with other preventative measures. Allowing family groups (or similarly designated associated groups) the ability to sit with each other would increase attendance and improve the ability of events to remain viable. In addition, consideration of decreasing distancing based on other preventative measures (mask wearing, etc.) should be contemplated if approved by healthcare professionals. The likelihood of sports and entertainment events surviving will be dramatically decreased if significant reductions in attendance are required for a protracted amount of time.

It is our recommendation that professional sports (and potentially major college sports) be separated from “Mass Gatherings” protocols as the steps taken to mitigate risk are significantly more intensive in professional sports venues than in other “Mass Gatherings”. It is further recommended that the Governor allow the return of pro sports (and potentially major college sports) under respective league safety protocols and/or protocols agreed to between league and players unions (or conferences/other governing bodies for major college sports).

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

One of the greatest opportunities for enhanced safety, resilience and improvement within this sector will come through technology enhancements. Creating “contactless experiences” will require significant technology upgrades in order to properly screen, admit and serve patrons. Wi-Fi and broadband upgrades will be necessary to accommodate these features that will guide the new patron experience. CARES Act funding would be an important factor in acquiring the technology upgrades necessary to keep our patrons and employees as safe as possible.

FITNESS

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment)

Louisiana is different from most states in that most club operators here are independent operators without deep cash reserves. Most clubs immediately furloughed employees and have had rehire issues related to bringing teams back off of higher unemployment pay. Summer business is normally strong for Multipurpose clubs, but these clubs will be off their normal numbers by as much as 30 - 50% - mostly in departmental revenues which can make up 40+% of their total revenues. Growth is going well since start up and clubs should reach normal numbers within 60-90 days, but strong summer business will be missed by large multipurpose clubs which are used to carry them during the slower holiday months.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

The primary factors that made the sector more vulnerable to disruption. Misunderstanding of industry as germ-filled businesses compromising health instead of an industry which keeps the community healthy. The media and government (CDC) caused this issue.

Unequal treatment of clubs – Country clubs were unintentionally left out of state regulations which closed-down multipurpose health clubs. Country clubs kept their outdoor activities going - golf, tennis, and pool operations when health clubs were mandated to close them.

Labor intensive industry (payroll is 45-55% of revenues). Without revenues, most clubs had to furlough employees immediately.

High-touch industry and employees and customers work in close proximity to each other. Business will come back slower to clubs than most other industries because of misconception of higher risks of spreading COVID-19.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Most important strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Designate health clubs/studios as essential business.	Government – state, local	Designate clubs as essential (Level B) - meaning last businesses to close other than Emergency Responders and Hospitals. Close only when safety would be compromised for employees and customers. Health Clubs should be part of Healthcare. Exercise is medicine.	• Designate clubs/studios as essential businesses and put in the Healthcare sector. • Could set plans to reduce operations when necessary without closing (hours of operation, capacities, services). Clubs are very adaptable.
2.	Be specific on club type when regulating.	Government – State, local	To regulate better, understand the different types and departments within each	Close dept. by dept. instead of club as a whole unless needed or consider this as needs arise. For example, outdoor activities could continue if the indoor closes and is safe to operate outside, or close classes and studios but keep fitness floors open.
3.	Minimum capacity of 50%.	Governments – State and local	Regulations of capacities	Lowest capacity rules should be 50% - not profitable below that.
4.	Promote clubs as being safe and wellness is needed during these times.	Government, community.	Marketing	Healthy conversations during press briefings, PSAs.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Most important strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Designate as essential (details in previous section) and put into the healthcare sector.	Government-State and Local	Governance	Clubs are needed for wellness and healthy living.
2.	Spread word that people need to start healthy habits- exercise and nutrition.	Government	Funding from CARES act should help restart with marketing pushing	Marketing to push support of small businesses including health clubs

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment
Status and Recovery: Cash reserves are not as deep in this sector as most industries so longer shutdowns will result in more permanent closings. This one was right at the brink – 60 days.

- Hiring back employees and usage by members/guests is growing quickly since reopening. Better than expected start and growth and without any disruption it is expected to be back to normal within 60 – 90 days.
  High unemployment payments are interfering with clubs' ability to hire employees back.
- Low priced, high volume clubs depend on large numbers of members for success and are usually the clubs servicing the lower income demographic. Occupancy requirements below 50% cause issues with this type of club and also with studios (occupancy is less of a problem with large multipurpose clubs).
- Are there additional resources or information needed to help accelerate sector recovery? Spread the word that clubs are not only safe but also a part of the solution for our community's health and wellness. Exercise is medicine.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
Factors that made the sector most vulnerable to the impacts identified in the previous section.

Questions to consider:
What underlying, systemic concerns made members of the sector particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19? (Examples include: supply chain issues, inability to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and spending, outdated technologies, overly reliant on a single sales channel, overly leveraged, lack of working capital and inability to adapt to government-imposed restrictions)
Combination of a lack of working capital and an industry that requires high staffing levels for some types of operations - multipurpose clubs (43-55% of revenues go to payroll). Issues with mandated occupancy levels lower than 50% - not profitable and shortage of working capital causes issues with this sector. This causes issues with classes and keeps members away due to this hassle of trying to get a spot in class. High Touch requires extra staffing and additional disinfectant to sanitize to keep safe during these times.

In what ways were members of the sector best able to successfully adapt or pivot their operations in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19? (Examples include remote-work capabilities, online transactions)

- Quickly enact touchless POS transactions.
- Pushed members to handle accounts online
- Virtual online classes to members and to the community.
  Clubs are very adaptable. Spaced out equipment, stepped up sanitation, modified types of services and sizes. If needed, we can modify our services and offerings more to meet the safety protocols of almost any situation.

What are opportunities to improve sector capabilities beyond the COVID-19 pandemic?
State and Federal help with funding healthy living. At Federal level, PHIT Act should be passed. States could have similar funding to help. Medical costs are spiraling out of control and this is part of the solution.

Are there shortcomings or threats unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic that could destabilize or hinder growth in the sector? For instance, to what extent is your sector prepared for the world-wide economic challenge of mass displacement of jobs due to new technologies (e.g., automation and artificial intelligence), environment disaster, increasing sociopolitical tension from entrenched poverty, changing global economic patterns or potential future pandemics?
Threats of increased governmental taxes and regulations which could drive costs up. Costs of frivolous lawsuits. Protection is needed here.

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen

Questions to consider:
What protocols and policies should be used to ensure safety of workers and customers (assuming we have moved to Phase 2)?

Continued efforts with sanitation and social distancing. Education on how it spreads. Face coverings should be relaxed in Phase III if social distancing can be managed. Coverings are not protecting employees (minimal protection) when customers are not required to have them also. Also, there are safety concerns of frontline employees having to keep them on 6-8 hours a day with little to no breaks. Also, employees who have physical jobs can have issues with breathing, vision (some face coverings block or hinder visibility), and sanitation (touch face more often and coverings get dirty). For the minimal protection under these circumstances to others and healthcare now able to handle COVID-19 cases in Phase III, face coverings for employees should be recommended but not mandated unless social distancing cannot be maintained.

What are some short-term strategies that can be implemented to help accelerate the recovery of the sector?
State could help communities and clubs by investing in wellness initiatives by temporarily suspending sales taxes charged on membership dues and fees and other healthy purchases each year to promote health and wellness. Could do this in beginning of each year (January and February). Could drive healthy New Year's resolutions. Our state is one of the least healthy states and this would show that we are trying to drive change. Short Term – do it in September (Back to School and Health). Long term – every January.

What are threats that may hinder or thwart recovery? Any future mandates requiring clubs to occupancy levels lower than 50%.
Lawsuits dealing with COVID cases (possible).
Extension of high unemployment payments. Rather see another stimulus check instead of this.
Costs of extra sanitation needed – staffing and products.

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events.
Strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient in the future

Questions to consider:
What ways could CARES Act funds be used to strengthen the sector(e.g., workforce training)?
Help fund healthy living (detailed above).
What strategies and policies could better position the sector for the future and what. Are the ideas for implementation? We need to focus on the health of our nation to minimize the effects of these health emergencies. Clubs are a part of healthcare and are needed for the overall wellness (fitness of mind and body) of our country. Need to put health clubs as an essential business and part of Healthcare. Need to invest in healthy living to cut down on medical costs by suspending sales taxes on healthy purchases.

Are there opportunities for this sector to build greater equity, internally or for the state as a whole? Yes, professionally run health clubs are a benefit to the state. Healthier habits make for a stronger population with less healthcare costs which has a huge impact on the state. Health drives down medical costs for all.

Are there opportunities to foster more entrepreneurship and innovation in the sector?
Yes – small studios are great opportunities for innovation and are an easy entry into this industry. Lower investment levels and they work well in shopping and strip malls which can help with occupancy levels of those sectors which are suffering. Clubs and studios drive daily traffic which attracts more stores for these landlords. Promote these opportunities to the community.

Streaming live classes to members at home or away and virtual classes in clubs is a growing need which was made larger through this crisis. Need more IT involvement and possible rebates from state to grow this to help make it more affordable to do – costly to start. The more accessible and convenient we make exercise, the better it is for everyone.

Are there additional opportunities for innovation or improvements that will better position the sector?
Yes, listed above dealing with virtual classes and live streaming of classes and programs.

AQUATICS
SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
Water fitness and lap swimming plays a major role in adult recreation and personal health. Closing pools before Phase 1 impacted access to fitness swimming. Drowning is a major cause of death for children under the age of 14. Limited access to swimming lessons and water safety programs will result in a higher risk of drowning.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
The primary factors that made the sector more vulnerable to disruption. The cost to operate a pool while closed continues. Without memberships or fees collected to maintain pools, we run the risk of business closing, and the public permanently losing access to community, private, and public swimming pools across the state.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Most important strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen. Lap swimming, fitness swimming, swim teams, and private swim swimming lessons should continue, as social distancing can be maintained, and the industry is capable of utilizing high mitigation standards. In the absence of swimming lessons being available, water safety education should be included in children's Physical Education courses, even without access to a swimming pool. Training of lifeguard and water safety staff should be allowed to continue in accordance with Red Cross (or equivalent) standards to ensure water safety staff are readily available as soon as COVID-19 passes. We can't put the state in a position where aquatics venues and pools close down, the public has no access to water safety or swimming lessons, and we try to reopen pools at a later date without any certified water safety staff/lifeguards.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Swimming Lessons	Government	Governance, Funding	Continue to allow mitigated access to swimming lessons and water safety programming Create water safety education grants for use in schools and youth programming.
2.	Swim Team	Government	Governance	All swim clubs follow national guidance and best practices regarding physical distancing during practice and competition (virtual, small group, etc.)
3.	Commercial Pools	Government, Businesses	Governance	Use the capacity calculation to control access to "Controlled Recreational Swimming". Continue to promote the difference between congregate and controlled swimming.
4.	Adult Fitness	Government	Governance	Prioritize adult lap swimming in a mitigated environment and recognize the health implications of closing pools to the older population.
5.	Water Park	Government, Business	Governance, Processes	Look to national/professional organizations for methods of reopening this industry in a controlled manner. Avoid classifying water parks and theme parks in the same category, wherever possible. Recognize that water parks may be able to open some attractions while keeping others closed (if needed).
6.	All Aquatics	Government, General Public	Governance	Continue to emphasize that properly treated pool water is safe, but on-deck congregation is the driving force behind restrictions. Educate the general public that not all aquatic activities are the same, and pools can be safe, even during a pandemic.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Most important strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Access	Public	Funding, Governance	• Support local governments and small community associations as they attempt to reopen their swimming facilities. • Provide funding or grants to programs in low-income areas to make sure swimming pools remain available to all parts of the state. • Continue to support state parks/pools.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
2.	Water Safety	Government	Governance	Continue to provide funding and support for water safety education and swimming lessons.
3.	PPE Tax Credit	Government	Governance	Consider a state tax credit or refund for expenses related to businesses purchasing PPE, hand sanitizer, etc.

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment
Questions to consider:

- **What is the status of the sector (e.g., unemployment, status of business operations)?**
  - o While most private facilities are reopening and will be able to recover quickly, we expect local governments will need to make tough budget choices. As local parishes and cities determine where to save money, we are concerned that aquatics will be on the chopping block.
- **How quickly will the sector recover in the future (if no new strategies are implemented)**?
  - o Private/HOA – Will likely be able to recover quickly if they remain open all summer.
  - o Water Parks – Almost all revenue is generated during 3-4 months of the year. Those revenues have stopped but many of the expenses have continued.
- **Are the impacts to the sector different across the state?**
- **Are there concerns/issues that are unique to this sector?**
- **Are there additional resources or information needed to help accelerate sector recovery?**
  - o Water Parks drive tourism and have a limited season. We should work to get these reopened as soon as possible.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
Factors that made the sector most vulnerable to the impacts identified in the previous section.
Questions to consider:

- **What underlying, systemic concerns made members of the sector particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19? (Examples include: supply chain issues, inability to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and spending, outdated technologies, overly reliant on a single sales channel, overly leveraged, lack of working capital and inability to adapt to government-imposed restrictions)**
  - o Our industry is mostly seasonal and the pandemic hit at the most crucial part of the season. Ability to train new lifeguards was a significant issue.
  - o Most seasonal venues collect most of their revenues for the entire year in May – August.
- **In what ways were members of the sector best able to successfully adapt or pivot their operations in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19? (Examples include remote-work capabilities, online transactions)**
- **What are opportunities to improve sector capabilities beyond the COVID-19 pandemic?**
- **Are there shortcomings or threats unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic that could destabilize or hinder growth in the sector? For instance, to what extent is your sector prepared for the world-wide economic challenge of mass displacement of jobs due to new technologies (e.g., automation and artificial intelligence), environment disaster, increasing sociopolitical tension from entrenched poverty, changing global economic patterns or potential future pandemics?**

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen
Questions to consider:

- **What protocols and policies should be used to ensure safety of workers and customers (assuming we have moved to Phase 2)?**
- **What are some short-term strategies that can be implemented to help accelerate the recovery of the sector?**
- **What are threats that may hinder or thwart recovery?**

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient in the future
Questions to consider:

- **What ways could CARES Act funds be used to strengthen the sector (e.g., workforce training)?**
  - o Training grants for aquatics staff (lifeguards and water safety instructors)
  - o Water safety education programs in schools if pools aren't available
- **What strategies and policies could better position the sector for the future and what are the ideas for implementation?**
- **Are there opportunities for this sector to build greater equity, internally or for the state as a whole?**
- **Are there opportunities to foster more entrepreneurship and innovation in the sector?**
- **Are there additional opportunities for innovation or improvements that will better position the sector?**

Restaurants & Entertainment – Restaurants & Bars
Building a more Resilient Louisiana for Restaurants and Bars
Streamline the Licensing and Permitting Process - Restaurants and Bars are faced with addressing an array of licensing, permitting and regulatory registrations and applications. Where possible and there exists dual licenses (ATC and Local ABO) consider using the identical applications, allowing for one set of fingerprints, common sharing of background checks etc. Develop a centralized approach online that would provide a list of the potential licenses or permits required to open a business. Align state and local licenses and permit renewal dates so that one reminder could be generated from the system to avoid missing a deadline to renew.

Create an Economic Development Fund that focuses on small and startup businesses (restaurants and bars)- Capital to open, renovate and operate restaurants and bars is limited to friends and family, angel investors, owner savings etc. Consider a program where a restaurant or bar could be provided a state guaranteed loan up to $100,000 subject to credit verification. This could cover a percentage of capital required to open the business. This could include a partnership with the Louisiana Bankers Association to identify those banks who have the interest in being a primary source of lending for restaurant and hospitality businesses. Building a viable business requires start-up capital and working capital to sustain it through the volatile business cycles. This could be further expanded to provide loan guaranty to hospitality businesses seeking to expand their footprint or business.

Develop an equitable approach to recognizing restaurants, bars and event venues need to be treated similarly. When one group or type of businesses operate when others are ordered to be closed, this period of closure could result in the business failing to reopen. We need all hospitality businesses to understand their risk profile and offer mitigation plans to address or minimize operational exposure.

Expand the Open Safely approach to providing ongoing, up to date information on current restrictions and opening guidelines. A single source for all information by industry would be desirable. Develop a section of frequently asked questions that is searchable by industry. Recognizing that most business owners want to be compliant, the more specific the information the better they can organize their operating plan. Work with LCTCS or LED to devise a professional curriculum (20-30 hours) that will provide education in the responsibilities and obligations of operating a successful hospitality business. Providing basic understanding of employees and human resources, marketing and advertising, accounting and taxes, regulatory matters, building business plans all while planning or growing a successful business. So many of our entrepreneurs have the passion and drive to succeed but lack the understandings of the responsibilities that you undertake when you open a new business, acquire an existing business or seek to expand your business revenue or number of locations.

Consider development of an entrepreneur's advisory program where current successful business people interact with budding hospitality business entrepreneurs and startups. Completion of this orientation could be a required step to apply to access the state guaranteed entrepreneurial lending program.

Through a partnership with the Louisiana Workforce Commission develop an orientation program that provides employers with information on the various existing programs and funding available for workforce recruitment, apprenticeship and training, incumbent or displaced worker training. Developing valuable skills in a business' incumbent workers who already understand the work processes and job demands benefits the worker, employer and their community.

Build an industry model for hospitality to become an employer of choice. Those employers offer wage increases for employees who advance their training or skills development. Additionally these "choice" employers offer an array of benefits for paid leave, group benefits etc. to attract and retain a better workforce.

Align current efforts on re-entry and criminal justice reform to develop programs for industry training and skills development pre-release. Using established culinary curriculum work with the Department of Corrections and local sheriffs who provide pre-release housing to implement this release to job program.

Update current alcoholic beverage permit restrictions to allow a non-violent felon (other restrictions or violations may apply) who has completed their term to apply for a restaurant manager card after two years. Consider allowing a restaurant manager card holder or a felon who has completed five years post-release to apply for a license as an owner or partner of a licensed restaurant establishment. (Subject to review and approval of the ATC Commissioner.) This provides an employment opportunity to those re-entry individuals to seek work in restaurants.

Continue to support programs that are developed for high school students that provide the training and knowledge with an industry based credential to move from school to work. Whether it is Jump Start or another derivative of this, providing a pathway to a rewarding career path at high school graduation is desirable. Support the Department of Education career diploma in these specialty approved credentialed programs.

Develop an industry approach to providing better financial and program support options for our musicians. As part of our culture, the COVID crisis has illustrated there is no safety net and limited advocacy on their behalf. Providing options for them to perform and earn their living keeps alive this vibrant part of the attraction of our state.

Restaurants & Entertainment – Parks & Recreation
SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS
1A. Sector Impact Assessment
Parks, trails, and open green spaces have experienced a tremendous increase in use as outdoor activity is listed as one of a few allowed and recommended essential activities during the COVID-19 public health pandemic as they provide significant physical and mental health benefits. However, indoor recreation centers and programs along with large outdoor community events were significantly adversely affected due to their indoor and large gathering nature, with some still unable to open, offer full use of facilities or resume events and programs

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
Park and recreation programs that largely depend on sales tax and self-generated revenues, such as user fees, were more vulnerable and suffered more during the pandemic than those agencies that are primarily funded through ad valorem or property taxes.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19
Post COVID-19 Recommendations

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Increased signage	Local Government	Tool	Increased communication with the public through signage of CDC recommendations for using parks such as maintaining 6ft of physical distance for other users not in the same household.
2.	Increased virtual offerings	Local government		Continue community engagement through increased virtual health and recreational opportunities
3.	Follow CDC recommendations	Local government		Continue safety protocols per federal, state, and local guidance regarding size of gatherings and programs, frequent sanitizing of high touch areas, masks for employees, frequent hand washing, etc.
4.	Expand partnerships	Local government		Partner with other local government and nonprofit agencies in response to pandemic. Examples include allowing food distribution, blood drives, and COVID testing to occur at parks and outdoor spaces.
5.	Prioritize resources and provide essential services	Local government		Focus communication and program efforts on serving vulnerable populations and those most impacted by the pandemic such as the elderly, children, and people of color.

Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events.
As mentioned above, funding for local park and recreation agencies should be a priority as the services they provide are essential services. Too often, park and recreation budgets are the first to cut and the last to get funded as the services they provide are often viewed as unnecessary and ancillary, but the current pandemic has shown that these services are indeed essential to improving the health of our community, which is especially important as underlying medical conditions are

responsible for worsening the impact of COVID-19 and other illnesses. When parks are funded, public health is funded. Parks provide open spaces and opportunities for the community to be active. Physical activity is the key to preventing obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and many other health conditions that cause the most deaths in the United States. It is vital that parks and recreation remain funded when governments are considering budget cuts. Prevention is much less expensive and harmful to the economy than treatment of a disease.

Partnerships with non-profit, for profit, and other governmental organizations should be prioritized so that resources can be leveraged across the community to work together to promote health and prioritize disease prevention, especially physical activity.

Within the next few days, the U.S. Senate is expected to consider the Great American Outdoors Act, which would fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Since 1965, LWCF has provided critical funding that has expanded access to outdoor recreation in communities across the country. Since the program's existence, LWCF has only received full funding twice. The Great American Outdoors Act would ensure permanent full funding for LWCF and provide $900 million in essential funding each year for projects that increase access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Ensure communications are reaching all populations	Local Government	Tool	Develop a full communications plan to reach all residents and patrons on the physical and mental benefits of parks and recreation including those that may not have access to internet
2.	Leverage health promotion programs	Local government	Tool	Health promotion programming should focus on chronic disease prevention and management as well as mental and behavioral health and coping with stress.
3.	Work collaboratively with community partners	Businesses/Local government	Governance	Work with state and local council on aging and other partners to identify the needs of most vulnerable population Leverage partnerships to connect residents with essential services such as healthcare providers, grocery delivery or temporary housing
4.	Expand partnerships	Local government	Governance	• Create welcoming in-person and virtual environment for all residents • Remove all barriers to provide equitable access to facilities, programs, and information
5.	Prioritize resources and provide essential services	Local government	Governance	Focus communication and program efforts on serving vulnerable populations and those most impacted by the pandemic such as the elderly, children, and people of color.

Retail & Small Business

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all sectors of the economy, but the retail & small business industries have been significantly impacted and are being tracked as one of the hardest hit sectors. Many "non-essential" retailers closed down completely for three months, which has been devastating to the industry as a whole. "Essential" retailers had the opportunity to operate during the initial phases of the pandemic, but all retailers will experience declines as the United States is now officially in a recession according to the National Bureau of Economic Research. Most of the retail and small businesses are first generation and have 50 or less employees in their organizations. According to McKinsey and Company, challenges are especially acute for small businesses (those with 500 or fewer employees), which account for a disproportionate share of the vulnerable jobs. Before COVID-19, they provided nearly half of all US private-sector jobs, yet they account for 54 percent (30 million) of the jobs most vulnerable during COVID-19. Specifically, half of jobs at firms with fewer than 100 employees are vulnerable, compared with 40 percent of those at large private-sector employers. Minority owned businesses face steep challenges as evidenced from the Bloomberg report that shows the economic shutdown has hurt black-owned businesses the most across racial and ethnic groups in the U.S., with a devastating 41% decline in black-owned businesses.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

While it is not yet possible to quantify the impact of the COVID-19 shutdown on businesses, we are beginning to see businesses make the difficult decision to close their doors permanently. Small and minority owned businesses are more vulnerable to the effects of the shutdown due to traditional barriers. The retail industry has been undergoing a transformation in recent history as a result of technological advances and evolving consumer behavior. While many retailers have been intending to ramp up their online presence and curbside opportunities, the pandemic forced retailers to pivot in record time. Some less technologically advanced retailers will face challenges in providing a shopping experience that consumers will continue to embrace. Retailers also face vulnerabilities in finding the most appropriate health and safety protocols in order to make consumers and employees feel comfortable enough to shop and work at pre-pandemic levels.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Gap Funding	LED	Financial access	Small business gap loans specifically for operational expenses including payroll and fixed expenses for business operations with the same re-payment terms and fixed interest. Create a small business gap fund using the guidelines from the current LED Loan program. This fund would be accessed by businesses that are currently in operation but not able to operate at full capacity and are not able to maintain their fixed expenses due to regulatory stipulations or CDC health guidelines that limit their profitability due to reduction in customers or ability to operate Allow businesses that have ITNs to participate in the gap loan funding Loan reduction weighted on prepayment of the overall balance, resulting in that portion being convert-ed into a grant (forgivable grant portion).
2.	Seed capital for entrepreneurs	LED	Financial access	Expand or convert existing small and emerging business programs
3.	Access to capital through banks		Financial access	Incentivize banks to engage in community banking, lending to small businesses. Engage with banks that hold state funds and local/regional banks Make lending application process accessible for small/micro businesses Reasonable credit criteria based off the business and not the individual
4.	Relief to Landlords	Local and State Government	Policy/legislation	To assist small and microbusinesses, consider an incentive to their landlords to reduce one of their larger expenses: rent. Provide a grant or other type of relief, such as tax incentives, tied to abatement of rent they give to their commercial tenants. It should be a dollar-for-dollar match but needs to provide a cap per tenant. Similarly, is there an incentive that can be provided to utility providers?

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
5.	Safe Harbor from Litigation	State and Federal Government	Policy/legislation	Introduce legislation that provides immunity to businesses that re-open from lawsuits arising out of COVID-19 claims. For immunity, businesses must have complied with health and safety guidelines to re-open. Additional legislation for CGL carriers to provide their insureds with defense for COVID-19 claims. While causation may be hard to prove for a claimant and therefore denied by the carrier, this doesn't prevent claimant from filing suit against the business.
6.	Anti-discrimination Reminder	Businesses, Local and State Government, Residents	Policy, Statement, Enforcement	Statement from the Governor's Office reminding everyone that it is illegal under state and federal law to discriminate as a place of public accommodation and/or as an employer on the basis of race, national origin, etc. LCHR should take public action against HD Graphic in Monroe for their blatant violation of Louisiana Revised Statutes 51:2247 as a deterrent.
7.	Phase 3 Private Office Allowance	Local and State Government	Policy	Phase 1 limited private offices to 1 person occupancy. Future phases should permit private offices to more than 1 person occupancy if additional persons are of the same household, provided that overall building occupancy limit is being complied with. Will permit parents to bring their kids to work with them due to the limited childcare/camp options or concerns about sending their kids to childcare/camp.
8.	Virtual Job Fair	LWC	Programs	Physical job fairs are not practical at the moment. Employers may be in need of employees for a variety of reasons. Create a venue for Louisiana employers to meet potential employees at a set time for either a virtual meeting or to set up appointments for later interviews. It could be a one-time event during COVID-19 and converted to an ongoing periodic event afterwards.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
9.	Technical assistance/ transition assistance	LED	Programs	"Once stop" technical assistance for small businesses: wrap-around services - marketing, legal, accounting. Statewide transitional business service "creator" Forecast is bleak re the number of small businesses who will survive the COVID crisis under their prepandemic services. Some way to provide assistance in transitioning into a new business model and industry: access to short term funding, grants, services, legal and accounting advice, etc., to pivot into a new industry. Contract with business development centers or chambers of commerce to partner and identify businesses that could participate. Organizational achievements reported to LED. Statewide-capacity instead of just regions.
10.	Marketing strategy to increase consumer demand	LED	State-implemented marketing campaign	Awareness campaign for businesses that are open. Online presence/portal that all LA registered businesses can access to provide information regarding their open status. Since businesses have to register with the Secretary of State, maybe some way for them to self-attest that they are in fact open, but the onus on the business owners to input their hours of operation, other business information.
11.	"Inspection" service	Fire Marshal/DHH/ Colleges and Technical Schools	Programs	Mock, voluntary, no pressure "inspection" for businesses that could come from business peers to go over their reopening "plan." Unannounced inspections are always stressful, even if you are running a good business. Inspections could be announced and scheduled to help businesses prepare for the following phases, make sure they are in compliance with phase restrictions. Inspections could be conducted virtually and avoid a physical visit. Display decal showing "inspected" or self-attested as compliant

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				Leverage our relationship with LED, Secretary of State, and Workforce Commission for something like this. "Inspections" could also be conducted by volunteers or students.
12.	Centralized guidance materials for businesses whose employees are diagnosed with COVID	LED/DHH	Guidance	State provided checklist for regulations mandated by the administration
13.	Language access for all state-issued materials and website information		Accessibility/ information	All state documents should be translated and made accessible on the state of LA website. Translations should be consistent for all standardized documents. Translators who are familiar with the intricacies of the non-English and English language, plus the technical aspects of what we're dealing with, are really difficult and expensive.
14.	Small business "handbook", centralized, accessible guidelines	LED	Guidance/information	Trusted and brief source for information. Small businesses are currently required to sort through different websites, etc.
15.	Local First, enhanced and enforced		Legislation, policy	Expand the use of small local businesses into contracting opportunities from a state perspective. There is a local first ordinance that has been on the books. Additional utilization of local businesses before going to outside businesses. First use as a minimum the local first program, and second, looking at what that percentage of utilization is and how we can increase use of our local businesses first. Not only keeps taxes and revenue within our business community but help keep these businesses alive and ensure business viability moving forward

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
16.	Procurement - campaign to support local first		Legislation, policy	We need to make it intentional and enforceable and really treat it as a priority. At a minimum, state procurement or those quasi-governmental agencies that are receiving capital outlay dollars and are being used in our state, need to enforce local first preference with our vendors for some of those opportunities. Include in tier 2 and beyond for state contracts. Include language for utilization of SEB/ Hudson/Veteran and Minority Business use
17.	Guidance for COVID + hurricanes	GOHSEP	Guidance - incorporating COVID related requirements	Need guidelines, especially businesses south of I-10. Advised that we are going to have to leave a little earlier, bring a few more things. It's one thing for employees, but what do businesses do if their employees want to leave early to take care of hurricane-related matters? Need guidelines on what is expected and how businesses and employees should deal with this. Statewide credentialing for re-entry (include process for undocumented employees to cross parish lines to return)
18.	Clarity on capacity versus social distancing	DHH/CDC/LWC	Guidance	
19.	Guidance/ solutions to unemployment vs. available jobs that pay less than unemployment	Small Business Owner	Guidance	Employees not wanting to return to work because of the amount they can get in unemployment. Although an employer can report a non-returning employee to the workforce commission, employers are hesitant to create non-productive relationships with employees. Should be something that comes from the Workforce Commission to demonstrate, rather than the employer.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
20.	Career path incentives, fast track licensing for needed industries	Small Business owners/ entrepreneurs/ displaced employees	Programs	Evaluate licensure costs, other deter-rents for people going into professions where we need employees. Identify fast track measures post other disasters per professional board recommendation Need to be focused on the industries that are going to be actually operating.
21.	Underutilized programming	LED/Chambers	Programs/Webinars	Look back at programs that are currently underutilized, and direct people to them. Many businesses were not funded through PPP or EIDL because they did not have their paperwork in place. Might not have understood how to set up their organizational documentation, what end of fiscal year, those kinds of things – full incubator services.
22.	Establish or Leverage Mentorship Program for Small and Micro Businesses in a Variety of Sectors	LED, Chambers of Commerce	Programs	A mentor can help to navigate the complex challenges that businesses face, including challenges that have arisen due to the pandemic.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Distance Learning	Local and State Government	Policy	Develop in advance a detailed Distance Learning plan for schools and districts to implement in the event of another stay-at-home order/school closure, including monthly or semester curriculum intended to be covered. As part of the documents that parents fill out at the beginning of a school year, have a Distance Learning survey included that gives the schools and districts an idea of the limitations (internet access, equipment, etc.) that may be faced by families, similar to the one that EBRPSS sent out at the end of April. Should include a summer school at the school component if needed and if conditions exist that would permit it. Find out from this period of distance learning from the administrators, teachers and parents, what worked and what needs to be improved.
2.	Economic Relief/ Funds Training	Businesses, Local and State Government	LED Program	Using PPP process and roadblocks as a framework, train businesses on how to apply for economic relief being provided by the federal government. Discuss the roadblocks that certain businesses may face, i.e. language barriers, using independent contractors versus using employees, no prior relationship with a lender, etc. Discuss retaining documents that may be needed to either obtain the relief or to comply with the requirements for forgiveness.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
3.	Technical assistance post-COVID		Programs	Broad access to technical assistance, business counseling, reopening advice, part of the considerations for a successful workplace. Post assistance tracking Assist businesses during transitioning or pivoting process to adapt and maintain continuity of service offering or scale to the current need
4.	Incentives to Encourage Small Businesses to have Preparedness Plans in Place in order to respond to Natural Disasters, Pandemics, or other Business Interruptions	LED	Tax Incentive	Proactive planning will assist in economic recovery efforts by allowing businesses to continue operations or re-open more quickly, while also keeping more employees on the payroll during the event.
5.	Provide tax credits for purchases of PPE and other preparedness expenses	LDR	Tax Credit	Tax credits could encourage the continued purchases of PPE by businesses in order to promote safety and awareness for customers and employees
6.	Consider Suspension or Repeal of the Inventory Tax for Affected Businesses and Suspension or Repeal of the Associated State Tax Credit	Local and State Government	Legislation, policy	This action would allow affected businesses to use the funds to pay inventory taxes to reinvest in their businesses.
7.	Establish state and local sales tax holidays for consumers at brick and mortar businesses	LDR	Legislation	State and local governments should incentivize consumers to spend at local stores in order to maximize the return in the community.

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment

A report from Main Street America reveals nearly 31% of small businesses in Louisiana that responded to a survey are at risk of closing permanently over the next two months as a result of the effects of closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report added nearly 60% of small businesses that responded to the survey could close over the next five months. Nationwide, nearly 66% of small businesses face permanent closure in the next five months with more than 72% of workers facing unemployment, according to reports.

The United States Commerce Department's report in May, 2020 on retail purchases showed a sector with sales over the past 12 months down a crippling 21.6%. The monthly decline in April nearly doubled the previous record drop of 8.3%, which was set in March. Other than online, not a single retail category was spared in April, 2020:

- Building materials and garden supply stores down 3.5 percent month-over-month seasonally adjusted.
- Health and personal care stores down 15.2 percent month-over-month seasonally adjusted.
- General merchandise stores were down 20.8 percent month-over-month seasonally adjusted.
- Sporting goods stores were down 38 percent month-over-month seasonally adjusted.
- Electronics and appliance stores were down 60.6 percent month-over-month seasonally adjusted.
- Furniture and home furnishings stores were down 58.7 percent month-over-month seasonally adjusted.
- Clothing and clothing accessory stores were down 78.8 percent month-over-month seasonally adjusted.
- After panic buying in March, grocery sales fell 13%.

Predicting when retail across the U.S. will resume to normal activity is difficult to do as economic recovery will likely be gradual and vary depending on geographic location and consumer confidence.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

Small and micro businesses are inherently more vulnerable to periods of economic instability due to undercapitalization as compared to larger organizations. Small and micro businesses also do not have access to the same resources that larger organizations are able to utilize.

The retail industry is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19. The pandemic has heightened already rapidly changing consumer expectations. We've seen already challenged retailers close stores permanently due to the pandemic. The retail industry has had some major shifts and is learning to adapt to build strong e-commerce platforms. The COVID-19 pandemic caused even more challenges for retailers that were not already poised to have a strong online presence in order to efficiently serve customers during the shutdown. Many retailers were able to amplify their e-commerce efforts and enhance curbside services. Retailers must continually evolve in order to satisfy consumer needs and preferences. Retailers will need to be acutely aware of what is necessary to create a superior customer experience in order to compete and be successful in the industry.

Rural Development

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS
Prepared for the Resilient Louisiana Commission
June 17, 2020

INTRODUCTION
Rural communities as a category are having their moment, but not for a good reason. These are not the best of times.
As if the challenges were not obvious to those who them, now the people of rural America have been set upon by a barrage of statistics and stories by a wide variety of news and policy organizations. In the past year alone, exhaustive reportage and opinion pieces on rural America have been published by the New York Times, the Guardian, the Washington Post, the Center for American Progress, Newsweek, CityLab, US News and World Report, Headwaters Economics, and others. The upside of turning the nation's gaze to rural communities is the focus on rural research and best practices that has informed this report.

There is plenty to talk about, of course: more than a century of economic decline at the hands of market forces and automation; a great tendency to romanticize about "the simpler life;" nostalgia as a dominant theme; financial, education, infrastructure, and health care challenges; resistance to change; the cruel economics of scale; an expectation of imminent rescue by an auto plant. All of these things and more are part of rural community life in the 21st Century.

One of the New York Times articles generated this reader comment, "Sometimes, you just need to make your town a good place to live." To that end, the Task Force has focused its efforts on ideas that would help make our rural communities better places to live. The ideas range from how to create more jobs and enterprises to how to drive up educational outcomes to health care and beyond.

ABOUT THIS WORK
The Task Force organized its work into a series of nine White Papers. Each White Paper identifies both challenges and opportunities. In the aggregate, they are intended to serve as path forward for rural Louisiana. They are an effort not so much to re-vitalize Rural Louisiana but to vitalize it with modern infrastructure and ideas. The emphasis here is not a return to some sepia-tinted rural past, but to create vibrant places for people to live, play, work, and prosper using ideas and best practices of the 21st Century. 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.

The Nine White Papers are on the following subjects:
1. Rural Broadband
2. Rural Entrepreneurship
3. Rural Food System Opportunities
4. Rural Outdoor Recreation
5. Rural K-12 Education
6. Rural Post-Secondary Education
7. Rural Healthcare
8. Rural Economic Development
9. Rural Government Resilience

To view the detailed findings and recommendations within the Rural Development Task Force's white papers, visit *www.opportunitylouisiana.com/resilientlouisiana/sectors/rural-development.*

Transportation & Infrastructure

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
Transportation and Infrastructure remained an essential industry during COVID-19; however, due to the reduction of non-essential travel, all transportation modes were severely negatively impacted due to lack of demand. The impact to Louisiana's Transportation Trust Fund, the source of funding the state's infrastructure system could be nearly $50 million per quarter for SFY 20 and 21. This mirrors national trends. Louisiana Transit Systems saw a range of 75% to 90% reduction in ridership. The aviation industry saw a range of 50%-90% of passenger travel as compared to a year ago and airports experienced significant loss related to the reduction of air traffic. Rail saw a significant decrease in carloads and companies such as Union Pacific are working through scenarios to reduce this year's capital spending plan. The delays and reduction of revenue is causing expansion projects to be delayed or put on hold as cost increases. The long-term effect cannot be determined as of yet, but it could be significant as it relates to competition and pricing in the future.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
The primary factors that made the sector more vulnerable to disruption

Transportation modes depend on demand. Transit, Rail, Aviation, Port, Trucking, all respond to the current economic demand. Funding future infrastructure projects is provided by current investments and the delay or disappearance of this investments will have ripple effects in the future. Unknown funding opportunities and a lack of investment in transportation and infrastructure will have the greatest impact on production, supply, workforce and quality of life for our citizens. Allowing other states to consume the construction industry will
only increase industry pricing in Louisiana.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Most important strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Provide appropriate education across modes to prevent the spread in public mobility.	System users	Tools	Public education to en-courage masking and social distancing when using various transportation modes. PPE for employees and customers may be needed
2.	Provide gap funding to Transportation Trust Fund to sustain construction efforts	Citizens served thru DOTD	Funding	The estimated reduction in gas tax revenues is estimated to be $40M-$50M/ quarter
3.	Provide gap funding to the aviation sector to address costs related to travel reductions	Citizens served thru Regional Commercial airports	Funding	While funded at the federal level, the appropriation was formulated such that facilities with higher debt received less federal support. This makes it harder for those airports to withstand the reduction in revenue. No predetermined request has been identified.
4.	Provide gap funding to the transit sector to address fair box shortages	Citizens served thru Regional transit authorities and rural entities	Funding	While funded at the federal level, the appropriation provided immediate funding to sustain operations. The appropriation does not account for the slow increase in transit ridership back to pre-COVID numbers.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Most important strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Increase sustained state funding to address states transportation infrastructure needs	State elected leaders	Funding	Prioritize select projects from the Highway Priority Program that taxpayers can identify and quickly experience benefits of to help gain support for additional tax. Increase funding to sup-port multi-modal transportation funding. Establish a revenue stream that maintains its value over time Add sales tax from vehicle sales both new and old. Begin to focus on how to collect from electric powered vehicles This should be our high-est priority due to the leverage in matching additional federal funding Use the momentum of the COVID response to commission a rigorous study with an action plan to develop a roadmap for building sustainable funding for roads and bridges. The study would address the following: the potential permanent reduction in gasoline tax user fees driven by change in our culture around remote work, develop new user fees for non-gasoline powered surface transportation over roads and bridges, and a statewide private road plan with user fees.
2.	Priority 2 request for federal stimulus focused on Interstate widening	State of Louisiana through DOTD	Funding	The state has an existing priority program and projects that could be funded. The allocation of dollars should be balanced and relative to the overall allocation after priority 1 has been satisfied. These projects require limited environmental permitting, Right-of-way and design effort to be “shovel ready” as soon as funds are available.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
3.	Priority 3 request for federal stimulus focused on bridge repair/ replacement	State of Louisiana through DOTD	Funding	The state has an existing priority program and projects that could be funded. The allocation of dollars should be balanced and relative to the overall allocation after priority 1 has been satisfied.
4.	Priority 4 request for federal stimulus focused on congestion re-lief/reduction	State of Louisiana through DOTD	Funding	The state has an existing priority program and projects that could be funded. The allocation of dollars should be balanced and relative to the overall allocation after priority 1 has been satisfied.
5.	Priority 5 request for federal stimulus focused on resilience projects	State of Louisiana through DOTD	Funding	The state has an existing priority program and projects that could be funded. The allocation of dollars should be balanced and relative to the overall allocation after priority 1 has been satisfied.
6.	Priority 6 request for federal stimulus focused on public works	State of Louisiana through DOTD	Funding	The state has an existing priority program and projects that could be funded. The allocation of dollars should be balanced and relative to the overall allocation after priority 1 has been satisfied
7.	Priority 7 request for federal stimulus focused on segments of independent utility of mega projects that benefit from phasing	State of Louisiana through DOTD	Funding	The state has an existing priority program and projects that could be funded. The allocation of dollars should be balanced and relative to the overall allocation after priority 1 has been satisfied.
8.	Priority 8 request for federal stimulus focused on project of interest to local governments and are not part of the state system	State of Louisiana through local Government	Funding	The state has an existing priority program and projects that could be funded. The allocation of dollars should be balanced and relative to the overall allocation after priority 1 has been satisfied.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
9.	Priority 9 request for federal stimulus focused on commuter rail	State of Louisiana through DOTD/ Southern Rail Commission	Funding	The state has an existing priority program and projects that could be funded. The allocation of dollars should be balanced and relative to the overall allocation after priority 1 has been satisfied.
10.	Priority 10 request for federal stimulus focused on addressing truck parking shortage	State of Louisiana through DOTD/ LMTA	Funding	The state has an existing priority program and projects that could be funded. The allocation of dollars should be balanced and relative to the overall allocation after priority 1 has been satisfied.
11.	Support additional federally allocated funding to expand aviation services across the state of Louisiana	Citizens served thru Regional Commercial airports	Funding	Funding priority should be to back fill lost revenue in order to ensure air-ports are able to match federal funds Identify local funding sources as the local businesses and communities most directly benefit from airports. It is important to fund these services but balancing modal investments is important. Roads and bridges are necessary to access aviation services.
12.	Support additional federally allocated funding to expand transit services across the state of Louisiana	Citizens served thru Regional transit authorities and rural entities	Funding	Priority should be for transit projects with regional impact (BRT from suburbs to downtown cores in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, light rail from MSY to downtown New Orleans) The Louisiana transit system has recently evaluated how they deliver transit service today. Large buses with limited routes will no longer be the only means for providing the services the public needs. Public transit will focus on using Micro-Transit solutions to improve service for urban and rural areas.

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment

The architecture/engineering industry has largely remained productive and resilient since the March 2020 shutdown due to ability to work from home practices and being deemed essential by state officials, especially for field staff on construction sites. The architectural industry and the petrochemical/oil and gas industry engineering sector have been more impacted than other sectors; the private development industry has experienced sharper decline in activity than public sector infrastructure, as is the case with petrochemical/oil and gas as result of international markets and geopolitical tension. Majority of architecture/engineering staff who have technology that allows them to work remotely transitioned well and have been able to strike work-life balance; younger staff have embraced the remote working environment very well; in many instances, signs of increased productivity are evident.

Construction projects, especially in surface transportation, have progressed with little interruption and have benefited from reduced traffic for expedited delivery. Surface transportation has shown more resilience than other transportation modes especially aviation and transit (all tolls to an extent) due to extremely diminished utilization. The greatest concern is the fact that the delayed effect of reductions in fuel taxes will eventually catch up with projects. The activities that are on-going were awarded months ago.

Enplanements appear to be on a slightly upward trajectory; however, Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport is still under national average. The national TSA passenger average for June 1-7, 2020 is nearing 15% compared to the same period of time in 2019. Other airports in Louisiana, including Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lake Charles, Lafayette, Monroe and Shreveport are all above the national average for June 1-7, 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. Fleets appear to have reached the bottom in regard to shrinking airline fleets. Air cargo will play a significant role in supporting the recovery.

Urban and Rural transit providers are slow to return to full operating capacity for various reasons. While response is anecdotal, many providers report low ridership and limited available drivers. The resilience of economic factors has yet to be fully determined.

According to the American Trucking Association, the economic situation is changing quickly. Forecast as of May 9, 2020 show the Quarterly Real Gross Domestic Product Growth taking a decrease in the 1st quarter of the year with a -4.8% growth, a dramatic reduction in the 2nd quarter of the year with a -30% growth, an expected increase of 6.5% growth in the 3rd quarter of the year and an expected increase of 9.4% growth in the 4th quarter of the year.

The Association of American Railroads (AAR) reported U.S. rail traffic for the week ending May 16, 2020 was 416,115 carloads and intermodal units, down 22 percent compared with the same week last year. Total carloads for the week ending May 16 were 184,415 carloads, down 30.2 percent compared with the same week in 2019, while U.S. weekly intermodal volume was 231,700 containers and trailers, down 14 percent compared to 2019. None of the 10 carload commodity groups posted an increase compared with the same week in 2019.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

Factors that made the sector most vulnerable to the impacts identified in the previous section.

Loss of workforce

If lost revenue is not replenished to at least make the markets whole, there is a risk of extended workforce loss due to project delays/cancellations and resulting layoffs or reduced hiring. The ripple effect is increased cost as market forces make the work more competitive. New graduates/intern hiring will likely be significantly reduced because of remote working and remote onboarding and uncertainty of market rebound through the summer, fall and winter of 2020. Private sector commercial development sector has been negatively impacted and large questions remain about the rate of increased activity and economic rebound. When a downturn hits the construction sector, skilled employees are laid off and tend to leave the industry so that when work picks back up, they are not available to fill the jobs. The hire/train cycle starts all over again. This employment recession is so sudden and so general that it is unknown if there will be problems finding skilled people when the industry starts to recover.

Production

Production on current and near-term projects may be impacted if virus rebounds later in the year and forces schedule delays (e.g. traffic count restrictions, inability to meet federal requirements for public engagement, etc.). Several airports that have Aircraft Maintenance Overhaul and Repair (MRO) operators on their campuses have indicated that they have seen layoffs at their facilities. With aircraft being parked across the country, you are seeing less demand for certain MRO services such as aircraft painting or interior upkeep.

Supply

Projects may be delayed. Aviation could see a reduction or permanent loss of commercial air service, reduction of air charter service. Railroads are still supplying uninterrupted service to move the raw materials and finished goods they have always moved 24/7 across the country. Some railroads are temporarily relocating crews and employees to locations of need, adjusting trip plans and transportation schedules, repositioning equipment and transitioning to backup facilities to continue business-critical operations. All modes are working to be ready for the pivot to recovery.

Funding

Funding is the most significant concern as it has a direct impact on all modes of transportation. Not only is funding needed to restore lost revenue from March to today, but new revenue is needed to make up for anticipated future losses because of decreased traffic volumes and passenger counts. Without surplus revenue, Louisiana was at point of risking federal funds prior to COVID and that risk is only greater now due to decreased travel. Future federal stimulus funds may be appropriated and a new surface transportation bill could pass either later this year or next that may require more match than what is customarily available. It will take

many months for the confidence in the future demand for goods and services to recover to the point that businesses are willing to make long term investments. Surface transportation will experience the quickest rebound and will be relied upon to employ multiple industries to rebound that are interconnected, specifically aviation, transit and other declining markets (e.g. petrochemical, etc.) For example, aviation revenues have been reduced due to a reduction in landing fees, fuel sales, parking fees, rental cars and other concessionaire fees. It is unknown what the long-term impact on the Aviation Trust Fund will be. The trucking industry is predicting a higher than normal amount of business failures/bankruptcies. We believe PPP monies have prolonged this event but 3rd and 4th quarters will be difficult for motor carriers.

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19

The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient in the future Questions to consider:

- What ways could CARES Act funds be used to strengthen the sector (e.g., workforce training)?
- What strategies and policies could better position the sector for the future and what are the ideas for implementation?
- Are there opportunities for this sector to build greater equity, internally or for the state as a whole?
- Are there opportunities to foster more entrepreneurship and innovation in the sector?
- Are there additional opportunities for innovation or improvements that will better position the sector?
- How will your recommendations prioritize vulnerable people and their jobs so we recover better than we entered this pandemic?
- How will your recommendations seek to eliminate the continuing impact of past and current discrimination?
- How will your recommendations ensure that ZIP codes don't predict health and economic outcomes?
- How will your recommendations create more ladders of opportunity so that Louisiana becomes a stronger, more prosperous and resilient state?
- The CARES Act has been awarded and implemented for rural sub recipients. We have not seen any restoration of tax credits for vertical construction projects or funding mechanisms to spur water and flood protection projects. Economic Development Assistance, CARES Act Monies and P3 Financing has not been seen. CRISI Grants, BUILD Grants, INFRA Grants, and Public Private Partnerships are opportunities available to the state for certain projects.
- Short Lines are exploring a potential State Tax Credit for infrastructure. Innovative programs like this could foster development in rural communities and help grown businesses.
- The timing of the Transportation Reauthorization legislation could be critical to investing in infrastructure in our rural communities.
- Prior to COVID-19, Louisiana annually spent the lowest of all southern states on transportation infrastructure, with a base program of $650 million. Louisiana divides $40 million among 35 ports across the state. Houston spends $200 million a year on their port, Mobile spends $100 million and Gulfport spends $50 million. Louisiana has to begin to invest to remain competitive.

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. The current DBE program that is operated by DOTD has had marked increases in participation goals. We should:

1. Determine if any anti-discrimination policies exist in transportation infrastructure that create barriers to opportunity.
2. Begin track data relative to inclusion, beyond the construction industry.
3. Provide support and resources for small and emerging business in the transportation sector.
4. Determine if mobility services are delivering fair and balanced practices such as access.
    - Alleviate travel times/distances to and from major job locations, prioritize broadband infrastructure projects to these areas and prioritize metro rail systems from outlying urban areas to downtowns of our larger cities.
    - If we prioritize rural infrastructure such as broadband and urban metro systems, this will provide additional opportunities for job seekers and small business.

Priority Allocations Survey Poll

Ranked in order of importance, which will be scaled to meet the available package of funds from the Federal government, State government, or combinations

#1 - Interstate Widening

#2 - Bridge Repair / Replacement

#3 - Congestion Reduction / Relief

#4 - Public Works (Dams, Flood Control Structures, Fiber)

#5 - Resilient Projects

#6 - Off System Infrastructure

#7 - Fund Segments of independent utility on capacity projects ready for delivery

#8 - Commuter Passenger Rail

#9 - Truck Parking

Restaurants & Entertainment – Stadiums & Arenas
SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

The health and safety of our community is the fundamental concern when considering the reopening of our stadiums and arenas for sports and entertainment. Safeguarding the health of employees, participants and attendees must be assured prior to any reopening of these facilities.

Sports and entertainment are ingrained in the fabric of the culture of Louisiana. Ultimately, the reopening of our venues is critical to our recovery, as they serve as iconic anchors for our cultural economy. Sporting events, festivals and concerts of all sizes at our venues attract millions of tourists and locals alike, sustain businesses of all sizes, and create local jobs. Louisiana's venues are vital community centerpieces in every corner of our State, serving as job centers for the celebration of sports, music, art, food, history, and Louisiana culture. Our venues and events are our most high-profile barometers of recovery, hope, and progress.

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
Through the events they host, Louisiana's venues generate billions in economic activity and hundreds of millions in taxes annually for the State of Louisiana. Economic losses have never been more evident than this spring, which witnessed the suspension of the NBA, cancellation of the NCAA Women's Final Four, the Zurich Classic, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, Festival International de Louisiane, Essence Festival, concerts and numerous other entertainment, professional, collegiate, amateur and recreational events throughout the State. The NCAA Women's Final Four alone would have generated an estimated $50M in economic impact over a four-day period.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
Venues operating at any reduced capacity this fall would result in severe financial losses across the State. Professional and/or college football regular seasons, annual major sporting events, three NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) Bowl Games, the Bayou Classic, the LHSAA Football State Championships, festivals, road shows, concerts, and other bookings are critical job and revenue generators for multiple stakeholders, including the venues themselves. As broadcast beacons of tourism, the additional PR value of televised, streamed and digital broadcast events from our venues showcase, reinforce our reputation as a fan favorite destination, and represent an opportunity loss that simply cannot be measured or replaced.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Facility Environmental Hygiene	Patrons, Employees, Event staff	Tools/Processes	All stadiums and arenas should conduct a thorough sanitizing of all areas and equipment with appropriate anti-microbial cleaning disinfectants prior to reopening. This standard should be maintained at all times. All facilities should increase the frequency of cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting of high traffic areas such as seating areas, restrooms, escalators, stairways and rails, concession areas, retail areas, etc. Appropriate cleaning methods and sanitizing/disinfecting products must be employed along with enhanced staff training to ensure cleanliness. Touchless hand sanitizer, hand washing stations and other cleaning supplies (disinfectant wipes, etc,) should be readily accessible to all patrons and employees throughout the facility. These areas should be consistently monitored to ensure they are adequately supplied. In indoor facilities and enclosed areas, consider replacing HVAC air filters and disinfect all ventilation and equipment.
2.	Employee Protocols & Policies	Employees	Tools/Processes	Prior to returning to work, all employees should undergo screening to assess whether they may be at higher risk of complications from COVID-19. If an employee is determined to be at higher risk, this should be considered when determining job responsibilities and interaction with patrons and other employees. Employees should have their temperature checked by use of a touchless infrared thermometer (or similar equipment) prior to entering the facility each day. Should the employee's temperature exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit they should be sent home. Employees may not enter the facility until they have no fever and/or other symptoms of COVID-19 illness. The screening and admittance of employees should be made with appropriate physical distancing between employees. In addition to temperature checks, it may be recommended that higher risk employees should receive respiratory system checks as determined by healthcare professionals.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				Employees must notify their employer immediately upon testing positive for COVID-19. Should any employee display signs of COVID-19 illness in the workforce they should be immediately isolated and sent home. Employees and managers should receive training in how to identify symptoms of COVID-19 and the importance of self-reporting these symptoms or recognizing them in others. Employees should practice the highest standards in personal hygiene and receive training on best hygiene practices and etiquette. Increased use of signage in break rooms, etc. should be displayed to remind employees to practice appropriate hygiene methods, including the proper way to wear, handle and dispose of PPE. All employees should wear a mask when being exposed to other employees or patrons. Use of personal protective equipment worn by employees, including gloves and masks, should be determined by role and responsibility. Proper PPE (gloves, masks, face shields, etc.) should be made available to employees, as appropriate, along with providing proper training in their use. Whenever possible (based on job responsibilities), employees should engage in proper social distancing. Employees should receive proper training into how to interact with patrons at all times including facilitating social distancing, tickets scanning, security screenings, etc.
3.	Concession & Retail Protocols and Procedures	Employees, Event staff, Vendors	Tools/Processes	It is recommended that all trans-actions should be cashless and, whenever possible, contactless. Accommodations should be made for patrons without access to cards (self-service conversion kiosks, etc.) if a cashless system is adopted. The number of employees allowed simultaneously in break rooms should be limited and monitored to ensure compliance with policy. Access to concession areas and queuing should be governed by social distancing

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				guidelines (including servicing areas). It is recommended that packaging (including condiments, cutlery, etc.) should be single serve, where appropriate. All concession and retail areas should be frequently cleaned and sanitized throughout the event. It is recommended that transactions (concessions and other re-tail) within the facility should be “cashless” and conducted with-out contacting an employee, when possible.
4.	Patrons Protocols & Procedures	Patrons	Tools/Processes	The number of patrons admitted to the facility will be determined with health and safety of the public, employees and participants the primary consideration. Venues and events should work together to provide a “contactless” experience whenever possible for the protection of patrons and employees. It is recommended that all ticketing should be paperless via mobile applications. Patrons should be able to scan their own ticket without their mobile ticket being touched by employees. Enhanced technology solutions should be employed, where possible, to reduce person-to-person interaction. It is recommended that Patrons should have temperature checks where possible, by use of a touchless infrared thermometer (or similar equipment) prior to entering the facility and should be done so in a climate controlled environment. Should the patron’s temperature exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit they should be removed for enhanced screening or refused entry. It may be appropriate to encourage patrons to wear masks while inside the venue (these may be removed briefly for consumption of food and beverage). Patrons will be encouraged to bring their own PPE, but venues may choose to provide (free or for a charge) masks and/or other PPE. Occupancy limits may be established in meeting rooms and retail spaces to promote physical distancing.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
				All patron entry, exits queuing and movement should be conducted with safe social distancing standards. Venues should take steps to assist in these efforts by installing physical cues and reminders (floor tape, signage, etc.). Seating configuration and available seats should be determined to ensure proper social distancing between individuals or associated groups of individuals. The standard of distancing should be flexible and determined by the prevailing health and safety guidance at the time of the event. Special accommodations may be made for higher risk patrons. Patrons or groups who do not adhere to venue health and safety requirements may be removed.
5.	Participant Protocols and Procedures Patrons	Events, Leagues, Businesses	Tools/Processes	Individual events, leagues and businesses using the facilities should establish appropriate protocols for testing, screening and monitoring the health of its participants and establishing guidelines for their employees participation in games or performances. Facilities and participants should establish appropriate protocols to avoid close interaction or contact with patrons and employees.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Continued Hygiene Protocol Training	All venue staff (full and part time)	Tools/processes	Ensure proper hygiene and safety protocols become part of standard employee training to better safeguard the health of all employees and patrons.
2.	Attendee Education	Patrons	Tools/Processes	Employ signage and other strategies to remind patrons of best hygiene practices to protect themselves, fellow patrons and venue employees.
3.	Infrastructure Planning and Implementation	Venues	Tools/process, Funding	Include infrastructure investments necessary for safer patron/staff safety in long-term planning (Wi-Fi upgrades for paperless tickets, cashless transactions, etc.)

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment Please see Section 1A. & 1B. Above

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

Stadiums and Arenas are particularly vulnerable because they often host events that have the highest number of people in close physical proximity. These individuals often travel from many different cities, regions and states and are susceptible to exposing, or being exposed, to potential viruses. In addition to patrons of venues, employees and staff of the venues commonly come into close physical contact with each other and venue patrons.

During this current pandemic, another challenge is that many of the part time and other employees necessary to host events are categorized as being at higher risk of negative impacts of COVID. Determining how to best protect these vulnerable employees is a significant consideration when planning for reopening and continuing operations.

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19

Much, if not all, of the training, hygiene and other policies should continue to be employed during Phase 2. What is critical to the industry is to find ways in which as many patrons as possible can safely access a venue during an event. A limiter to industry recovery may be the amount of separation being recommended between individuals or groups of individuals, especially when combined with other preventative measures. Allowing family groups (or similarly designated associated groups) the ability to sit with each other would increase attendance and improve the ability of events to remain viable. In addition, consideration of decreasing distancing based on other preventative measures (mask wearing, etc.) should be contemplated if approved by healthcare professionals. The likelihood of sports and entertainment events surviving will be dramatically decreased if significant reductions in attendance are required for a protracted amount of time.

It is our recommendation that professional sports (and potentially major college sports) be separated from “Mass Gatherings” protocols as the steps taking to mitigate risk are significantly more intensive in professional sports venues than in other “Mass Gatherings”. It is further recommended that the Governor allow the return of pro sports (and potentially major college sports) under respective league safety protocols and/or protocols agreed to between league and players unions (or conferences/other governing bodies for major college sports).

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations

One of the greatest opportunities for enhanced safety, resilience and improvement within this sector will come through technology enhancements. Creating “contactless experiences” will require significant technology upgrades in order to properly screen, admit and serve patrons. Wi-Fi and broadband upgrades will be necessary to accommodate these features that will guide the new patron experience. CARES Act funding would be an important factor in acquiring the technology upgrades necessary to keep our patrons and employees as safe as possible.

FITNESS
SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
Louisiana is different than most states in that most club operators here are independent operators without deep cash reserves. Most clubs immediately furloughed employees and have had rehire issues related to bringing teams back off of higher unemployment pay. Summer business is normally strong for Multipurpose clubs, but these clubs will be off their normal numbers by as much as 30 - 50% - mostly in departmental revenues which can make up 40+% of their total revenues. Growth is going well since start up and clubs should reach normal numbers within 60-90 days, but strong summer business will be missed by large multipurpose clubs which is used to carry them during the slower holiday months.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
The primary factors that made the sector more vulnerable to disruption
Misunderstanding of industry as germ-filled businesses compromising health instead of an industry which keeps the community healthy. Media and Government (CDC) caused this issue.

Unequal treatment of clubs – Country clubs were unintentionally left out of state regulations which closed-down multipurpose health clubs. Country clubs kept their outdoor activities going - golf, tennis, and pool operations when health clubs were mandated to close them.

Labor intensive industry (payroll is 45-55% of revenues). Without revenues, most clubs had to furlough employees immediately.

High-touch industry and employees and customers work in close proximity to each other. Business will come back slower to clubs than most other industries because of misconception of higher risks of spreading COVID-19.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Most important strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Designate health clubs/studios as essential business.	Government – state, local	Designate clubs as essential (Level B) - meaning last businesses to close other than Emergency Responders and Hospitals. Close only when safety would be compromised for employees and customers. Health Clubs should be part of Healthcare. Exercise is medicine.	• Designate clubs/studios as essential businesses and put in Healthcare sector. • Could set plans to reduce operations when necessary without closing (hours of operation, capacities, services). Clubs are very adaptable.
2.	Be specific on club type when regulating.	Government – State, local	To regulate better, understand the different types and departments within each	Close dept. by dept. instead of club as a whole unless needed or consider this as needs arise. For example, outdoor activities could continue if indoor closes and is safe to operate outside, or close classes and studios but keep fitness floors open.
3.	Minimum capacity of 50%.	Governments – State and local	Regulations of capacities	Lowest capacity rules should be 50% - not profitable below that.
4.	Promote clubs as being safe and wellness is needed during these times.	Government, community	Marketing	Healthy conversations during press briefings, PSAs

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Most important strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Designate as essential (details in previous section) and put into healthcare sector.	Government-State and Local	Governance	Clubs are needed for wellness and healthy living.
2.	Spread word that people need to start healthy habits-exercise and nutrition.	Government	Funding from CARES act should help restart with marketing pushing	Marketing to push support of small businesses including health clubs

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment

Hiring back employees and usage by members/guests is growing quickly since reopening. Better than expected start and growth and without any disruption it is expected to be back to normal within 60 – 90 days. High unemployment payments are interfering with clubs' ability to hire employees back.

- Low priced, high volume clubs depend on large numbers of members for success and are usually the clubs servicing the lower income demographic. Occupancy requirements below 50% cause issues with this type of club and also with studios (occupancy is less of a problem with large multipurpose clubs).
- Are there additional resources or information needed to help accelerate sector recovery?

Spread the word that clubs are not only safe but also a part of the solution for our community's health and wellness. Exercise is medicine.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment

Factors that made the sector most vulnerable to the impacts identified in the previous section.
Clubs are very adaptable. Spaced out equipment, stepped up sanitation, modified types of services and sizes. If needed, we can modify our services and offerings more to meet the safety protocols of almost
any situation.

- What are opportunities to improve sector capabilities beyond the COVID-19 pandemic? State and Federal help with funding healthy living. At Federal level, PHIT Act should be passed. State could have similar funding to help. Medical costs are spiraling out of control and this is part of the solution
- Are there shortcomings or threats unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic that could destabilize or hinder growth in the sector? For instance, to what extent is your sector prepared for the world-wide economic challenge of mass displacement of jobs due to new technologies (e.g., automation and artificial intelligence), environment disaster, increasing sociopolitical tension from entrenched poverty, changing global economic patterns or potential future pandemics?

Threats of increased governmental taxes and regulations which could drive costs up. Costs of frivolous lawsuits. Protection is needed here.

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19

The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen
Questions to consider:
What protocols and policies should be used to ensure safety of workers and customers (assuming we have moved to Phase 2)?

- Continued efforts with sanitation and social distancing. Education on how it spreads. Face coverings should be relaxed in Phase III if social distancing can be managed. Coverings are not protecting employees (minimal protection) when customers are not required to have them also. Also, there are safety concerns of frontline employees having to keep them on 6-8 hours a day with little to no breaks. Also, employees who have physical jobs can have issues with breathing, vision (some face coverings block or hinder visibility), and sanitation (touch face more often and coverings get dirty). For the minimal protection under these circumstances to others and healthcare now able to handle COVID cases in Phase III, face coverings for employees should be recommended but not mandated unless social distancing cannot be maintained.

What are some short-term strategies that can be implemented to help accelerate the recovery of the sector?

- State could help communities and clubs by investing in wellness initiatives by temporarily suspending sales taxes charged on membership dues and fees and other healthy purchases each year to promote health and wellness. Could do this in beginning of each year (January and February). Could drive healthy New Year's resolutions. Our state is one of the least healthy states and this would show that we are trying to drive change.

Short Term – do it in September (Back to School and Health).
Long term – every January.

- What are threats that may hinder or thwart recovery?

Any future mandates requiring clubs to occupancy levels lower than 50% .
Lawsuits dealing with COVID cases (possible). Extension of high unemployment payments. Rather see another stimulus check instead of this.

Costs of extra sanitation needed – staffing and products.

2D.Post COVID-19 Recommendations

Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events.Strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient in the future

Questions to consider:
What ways could CARES Act funds be used to strengthen the sector e.g., workforce training)? Help fund healthy living (detailed above).

What strategies and policies could better position the sector for the future and what are the ideas for implementation? We need to focus on the health of our nation to minimize the effects of these health emergencies. Clubs are a part of healthcare and is needed for the overall wellness (fitness of mind and body) of our country. Need to put health clubs as an essential business and part of Healthcare. Need to invest in healthy living to cut down on medical costs by suspending sales taxes on healthy purchases.

Are there opportunities for this sector to build greater equity, internally or for the state as a whole? Yes, professionally run health clubs are a benefit to the state. Healthier habits make for a stronger population with less healthcare costs which has

a huge impact on the state. Health drives down medical costs for all.

Are there opportunities to foster more entrepreneurship and innovation in the sector?
Yes – small studios are great opportunities for innovation and are an easy entry into this industry. Lower investment levels and they work well in shopping and strip malls which can help with occupancy levels of those sectors which are suffering. Clubs and studios drive daily traffic with attracts more stores for these landlords. Promote these opportunities to community.

Streaming live classes to members at home or away and virtual classes in clubs is a growing need which was made larger through this crisis. Need more IT involvement and possible rebates from state to grow this to help make it more affordable to do – costly to start. The more accessible and convenient we make exercise, the better it is for everyone.

Are there additional opportunities for innovation or improvements that will better position the sector?
Yes, listed above dealing with virtual classes and live streaming of classes and programs.

AQUATICS:
SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS

1A. Sector Impact Assessment
Water fitness and lap swimming plays a major role in adult recreation and personal health. Closing pools before Phase 1 impacted access to fitness swimming. Drowning is a major cause of death for children under the age of 14. Limited access to swimming lessons and water safety programs will result in a higher risk of drowning.

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
The primary factors that made the sector more vulnerable to disruption
The cost to operate a pool while closed continues. Without memberships or fees collected to maintain pools, we run the risk of business closing, and the public permanently losing access to community, private, and public swimming pools across the state.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Most important strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen Lap swimming, fitness swimming, swim teams, and private swim swimming lessons should continue, as social distancing can be maintained, and the industry is capable of utilizing high mitigation standards. In the absence of swimming lessons being available, water safety education should be included in children's Physical Education courses, even without access to a swimming pool. Training of lifeguard and water safety staff should be allowed to continue in accordance with Red Cross (or equivalent) standards to ensure water safety staff are readily available as soon as COVID-19 passes. We can't put the state in a position where aquatics venues and pools close down, the public has no access to water safety or swimming lessons, and we try to reopen pools at a later date without any certified water safety staff/lifeguards.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Swimming Lessons	Government	Governance, Funding	Continue to allow mitigated access to swimming lessons and water safety programming Create water safety education grants for use in schools and youth programming.
2.	Swim Team	Government	Governance	All swim clubs to follow national guidance and best practices regarding physical distancing during practice and competition (virtual, small group, etc.)
3.	Commercial Pools	Government, Businesses	Governance	Use the capacity calculation to control access to "Controlled Recreational Swimming". Continue to promote the difference between congregate and controlled swimming.
4.	Adult Fitness	Government	Governance	Prioritize adult lap swimming in a mitigated environment and recognize the health implications of closing pools to the older population.
5.	Water Park	Government, Business	Governance, Processes	Look to national/professional organizations for methods of reopening this industry in a controlled manner. Avoid classifying water parks and theme parks in the same category, wherever possible. Recognize that water parks may be able to open some attractions while keeping others closed (if needed).
6.	All Aquatics	Government, General Public	Governance	Continue to emphasize that properly treated pool water is safe, but on-deck congregation is the driving force behind restrictions. Educate the general public that not all aquatic activities are the same, and pools can be safe, even during a pandemic.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events. Most important strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient for the future.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Access	Public	Funding, Governance	• Support local governments and small community associations as they attempt to reopen their swimming facilities. • Provide funding or grants to programs in low-income areas to make sure swimming pools remain available to all parts of the state. • Continue to support state parks/pools.
2.	Water Safety	Government	Governance	Continue to provide funding and support for water safety education and swimming lessons.
3.	PPE Tax Credit	Government	Governance	Consider a state tax credit or refund for expenses related to businesses purchasing PPE, hand sanitizer, etc.

SECTION 2: DETAILED FINDINGS

2A. Sector Impact Assessment
Questions to consider:
What is the status of the sector (e.g., unemployment, status of business operations)?
While most private facilities are reopening and will be able to recover quickly, we expect local governments will need to make tough budget choices. As local parishes and cities determine where to save money, we are concerned that aquatics will be on the chopping block.

How quickly will the sector recover in the future (if no new strategies are implemented)?
- Private/HOA – Will likely be able to recover quickly if they remain open all summer.
- Water Parks – Almost all revenue is generated during 3-4 months of the year. Those revenues have stopped but many of the expenses have continued.

Are the impacts to the sector different across the state?
Are there concerns/issues that are unique to this sector?
Are there additional resources or information needed to help accelerate sector recovery?
- Water Parks drive tourism and have a limited season. We should work to get these reopened as soon as possible.

2B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
Factors that made the sector most vulnerable to the impacts identified in the previous section.

Questions to consider:
What underlying, systemic concerns made members of the sector particularly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19? (Examples include: supply chain issues, inability to adapt to changing consumer behaviors and spending, outdated technologies, overly reliant on a single sales channel, overly leveraged, lack of working capital and inability to adapt to government-imposed restrictions)
- Our industry is mostly seasonal and the pandemic hit at the most crucial part of the season. Ability to train new lifeguards was a significant issue.
- Most seasonal venues collect most of their revenues for the entire year in May – August.

In what ways were members of the sector best able to successfully adapt or pivot their operations in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19? (Examples include remote-work capabilities, online transactions).

What are opportunities to improve sector capabilities beyond the COVID-19 pandemic?

Are there shortcomings or threats unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic that could destabilize or hinder growth in the sector? For instance, to what extent is your sector prepared for the world-wide economic challenge of mass displacement of jobs due to new technologies (e.g., automation and artificial intelligence), environment disaster, increasing sociopolitical tension from entrenched poverty, changing global economic patterns or potential future pandemics?

2C. Recommendations within COVID-19
The timeline where COVID-19 is still present with no vaccine or treatment options. Strategies and guidelines to help the sector recover and strengthen

Questions to consider:
- **What protocols and policies should be used to ensure safety of workers and customers (assuming we have moved to Phase 2)?**
- **What are some short-term strategies that can be implemented to help accelerate the recovery of the sector?**
- **What are threats that may hinder or thwart recovery?**

2D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events.
Strategies and policies to help strengthen the sector and make it more resilient in the future

Streamline the Licensing and Permitting Process - Restaurants and Bars are faced with addressing an array of licensing, permitting and regulatory registrations and applications. Where possible and there exists dual licenses (ATC and Local ABO) consider using the identical applications, allowing for one set of fingerprints, common sharing of background checks etc. Develop a centralized approach online that would provide a list of the potential licenses or permits required to open a business. Align state and local licenses and permit renewal dates so that one reminder could be generated from the system to avoid missing a deadline to renew.

Create an Economic Development Fund that focuses on small and startup businesses (restaurants and bars)- Capital to open, renovate and operate restaurants and bars is limited to friends and family, angel investors, owner savings etc. Consider a program where a restaurant or bar could be provided a state guaranteed loan up to $100,000 subject to credit verification. This could cover a percentage of capital required to open the business. This could include a partnership with the Louisiana Bankers Association to identify those banks who have the interest in being a primary source of lending for restaurant and hospitality businesses. Building a viable business requires start-up capital and working capital to sustain it through the volatile business cycles. This could be further expanded to provide loan guaranty to hospitality businesses seeking to expand their footprint or business.

Develop an equitable approach to recognizing restaurants, bars and event venues need to be treated similarly. When one group or type of businesses operate when others are ordered to be closed, this period of closure could result in the business failing to reopen. We need all hospitality businesses to understand their risk profile and offer mitigation plans to address or minimize operational exposure.

Expand the Open Safely approach to providing ongoing, up to date information on current restrictions and opening guidelines. A single source for all information by industry would be desirable. Develop a section of frequently asked questions that is searchable by industry. Recognizing that most business owners want to be compliant, the more specific the information the better they can organize their operating plan. Work with LCTS or LED to devise a professional curriculum (20-30 hours) that will provide education in the responsibilities and obligations of operating a successful hospitality business. Providing basic understanding of employees and human resources, marketing and advertising, accounting and taxes, regulatory matters, building business plans all while planning or growing a successful business. So many of our entrepreneurs have the passion and drive to succeed but lack the understandings of the responsibilities that you undertake when you open a new business, acquire an existing business or seek to expand your business revenue or number of locations.

Consider development of an entrepreneur's advisory program where current successful business people interact with budding hospitality business entrepreneurs and startups. Completion of this orientation could be a required step to apply to access the state guaranteed entrepreneurial lending program.

Through a partnership with the Louisiana Workforce Commission develop an orientation program that provides employers with information on the various existing programs and funding available for workforce recruitment, apprenticeship and training, incumbent or displaced worker training. Developing valuable skills in a business' incumbent workers who already understand the work processes and job demands benefits the worker, employer and their community.
Build an industry model for hospitality to become an employer of choice. Those employers offer wage increases for employee's who advance their training or skills development. Additionally, these "choice" employers offer an array of benefits for paid leave, group benefits etc. to attract and retain a better workforce.

Align current efforts on re-entry and criminal justice reform to develop programs for industry training and skills development pre-release. Using established culinary curriculum work with the Department of Corrections and local sheriffs who provide pre-release housing to implement this release to job program.

Update current alcoholic beverage permit restrictions to allow a non-violent felon (other restrictions or violations may apply) who has completed their term to apply for a restaurant manager card after two years. Consider allowing a restaurant manager card holder or a felon who has completed five years post-release to apply for a license as an owner or partner of a licensed restaurant establishment. (Subject to review and approval of the ATC Commissioner.) This provides an employment opportunity to those re-entry individuals to seek work in restaurants.

Continue to support programs that are developed for high school students that provide the training and knowledge with an industry-based credential to move from school to work. Whether it is Jump Start or another derivative of this, providing a pathway to a rewarding career path at high school graduation is desirable. Support the Department of Education career diploma in these specialty approved credentialed programs.

Develop an industry approach to providing better financial and program support options for our musicians. As part of our culture, the COVID crisis has illustrated there is no safety net and limited advocacy on their behalf. Providing options for them to perform and earn their living keeps alive this vibrant part of the attraction of our state.

Restaurants & Entertainment –
Parks & Recreation
SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY TAKEAWAYS
1A. Sector Impact Assessment
Parks, trails, and open green spaces have experienced a tremendous increase in use as outdoor activity is listed as one of a few allowed and recommended essential activities during the COVID-19 public health pandemic as they provide significant physical and mental health benefits. However, indoor recreation centers and programs along with large outdoor community events were significantly adversely affected due to their indoor and large gathering nature, with some still unable to open, offer full use of facilities or resume events and programs

1B. Sector Vulnerability Assessment
Park and recreation programs that largely depend on sales tax and self-generated revenues, such as user fees, were more vulnerable and suffered more during the pandemic than those agencies that are primarily funded through ad valorem or property taxes.

1C. Recommendations within COVID-19

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Increased signage	Local Government	Tool	Increased communication with the public through signage of CDC recommendations for using parks such as maintaining 6ft of physical distance for other users not in the same household.
2.	Increased virtual offerings	Local government		Continue community engagement through increased virtual health and recreational opportunities
3.	Follow CDC recommendations	Local government		Continue safety protocols per federal, state, and local guidance regarding size of gatherings and programs, frequent sanitizing of high touch areas, masks for employees, frequent hand washing, etc.
4.	Expand partnerships	Local government		Partner with other local government and nonprofit agencies in response to pandemic. Examples include allowing food distribution, blood drives, and COVID-19 testing to occur at parks and outdoor spaces.
5.	Prioritize resources and provide essential services	Local government		Focus communication and program efforts on serving vulnerable populations and those most impacted by the pandemic such as the elderly, children, and people of color.

1D. Post COVID-19 Recommendations
Strategies for resilience in the face of future stressors and shock events.
As mentioned above, funding for local park and recreation agencies should be a priority as the services they provide are essential services. Too often, park and recreation budgets are the first to cut and the last to get funded as the services they provide are often viewed as unnecessary and ancillary, but the current pandemic has shown that these services are indeed essential to improving the health of our community, which is especially important as underlying medical conditions are responsible for worsening the impact of COVID-19 and other illnesses. When parks are funded, public health is funded. Parks provide open spaces and opportunities for the community to be active. Physical activity is the key to preventing obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and many other health conditions that cause the most deaths in the United States. It is vital that parks and recreation remain funded when governments are considering budget cuts. Prevention is much less expensive and harmful to the economy than treatment of a disease.

Partnerships with non-profit, for profit, and other governmental organizations should be prioritized so that resources can be leveraged across the community to work together to promote health and prioritize disease prevention, especially physical activity.

Within the next few days, the U.S. Senate is expected to consider the Great American Outdoors Act, which would fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Since 1965, LWCF has provided critical funding that has expanded access to outdoor recreation in communities across the country. Since the program's existence, LWCF has only received full funding twice. The Great American Outdoors Act would ensure permanent full funding for LWCF and provide $900 million in essential funding each year for projects that increase access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

	Description	Intended Audience	Recommendation Type	Details
1.	Ensure communications are reaching all populations	Local government	Tool	Develop a full communications plan to reach all residents and patrons on the physical and mental benefits of parks and recreation including those that may not have access to internet
2.	Leverage health promotion programs	Local government	Tool	Health promotion programming should focus on chronic disease prevention and management as well as mental and behavioral health and coping with stress.
3.	Work collaboratively with community partners	Businesses/Local government	Governance	Work with state and local council on aging and other partners to identify the needs of most vulnerable population Leverage partnerships to connect residents with essential services such as healthcare providers, grocery delivery or temporary housing
4.	Embed equity in plans, policies, and practices	Local government	Governance	Create welcoming in-person and virtual environment for all residents Remove all barriers to provide equitable access to facilities, programs, and information
5.	Prioritize resources and provide essential services	Local government		Focus communication and program efforts on serving vulnerable populations and those most impacted by the pandemic such as the elderly, children, and people of color.

Appendix

Comprehensive Game Plan for a More Resilient Louisiana