Understanding COVID-19 for Businesses

GOAL: Mitigate risk, protect employees and support customers during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new coronavirus. It first appeared in China in 2019 and is now a global pandemic, with an increasing number of cases spreading across the U.S. As of 3.19. 20: ½ of all cases in Florida are in South Florida.

- COVID-19 can be fatal, though symptoms range from mild to severe. More severe cases seem to be associated with specific high-risk populations, including the elderly and those with serious pre-existing conditions.

- According to the CDC, COVID-19 is likely spread through close contact with an infected person. When an infected person sneezes or coughs, others nearby can contract the virus by inhaling their respiratory droplets.

- Knowledge about the outbreak, including who is most at risk and how it spreads, is constantly evolving. For more information and tools for businesses: https://www.uschamber.com/coronavirus-response-toolkit

COVID-19 Business Preparedness Checklist

PRIORITIZE CRITICAL OPERATIONS

Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations).

PREPARE FOR SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Pre-schools and K-12 schools may be dismissed. Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees and/or sick families.

CREATE A COMMUNICATION PLAN

Put measures in place to effectively notify employees of the latest COVID-19 updates and information.

ESTABLISH POSSIBLE TELEWORKING POLICIES

Review human resources policies and explore whether you can establish flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours. Consider cancelling large work-related meetings or events.

COORDINATE WITH STATE EXTERNAL & LOCAL EXTERNAL HEALTH OFFICIALS

The intensity of an outbreak may by location, and local health officials will be issuing guidance specific to their communities. Employers should learn about the plans in place in each community where they have a business.

For more information about the coronavirus visit **cdc.gov**

5 Ways to Calm Coronavirus Fears for Businesses

- Communicate frequently with your employees: Reduce stress; keep them informed

- Take steps to keep your employees safe: Lower exposure, clean, hygiene

- Establish flexible workplace policies: Be accommodating and understanding

- Limit travel as much as possible

- Coordinate with state and local health officials: Stay informed and adhere to officials

Supporting Our Businesses

- Sharing local information on the take-out menus and hours on websites for residents and guests

- Identifying Plans for When this Breaks: community events (Fish fry, Craft Fair, Taste of the Beach), Keep Dollars Local Campaign, Resident Campaign to invite friends & family to visit

- What Can I Control: attitude, news flow, purchasing local-gift certificates, take-out, gifts (hotel stays), etc..

Resources For Businesses

From disaster assistance loans to fee forgiveness from banks and credit card companies, there are many resources offering relief to struggling small businesses during COVID-19:

- Governor Ron DeSantis has activated the Business Damage Assessment Survey to assess the impact of the Coronavirus on Florida's local business.

- For those affected by unemployment: http://floridajobs.org/job-seekers-community-services

- U.S. Chamber of Commerce: https://www.uschamber.com/coronavirus-response-toolkit

- Free weekly advertising, paper and assistance: www.newpelican.com

- Facebook offering 1M in grants to small businesses: https://www.facebook.com/business/boost/grants

- SBA to Provide Disaster Assistance Loans for Small Businesses: https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-newsroom/press-releases-media-advisories/sba-provide-disaster-assistance-loans-small-businesses-impacted-coronavirus-covid-19

- Capitol One, Citi and Wells Fargo are waiving monthly service fees for small business customers. Contact your provider.

- Broward County Coronavirus Assistance: https://www.broward.org/CoronaVirus/Pages/BusinessAssistance.aspx

Resources For Businesses

- Resources from the Restaurant Association: https://restaurant.org/Covid19-Coronavirus

- 8 Things Your Small Business Needs to Do

- 7 Things to Do When Creating an Emergency Work-From-Home Policy for COVID-19

- Staying Connected With Customers Through the Coronavirus Outbreak

- 5 Ways to Manage Coronavirus Concerns When Employees Can't Work From Home

- **For additional support, Chamber Member Businesses have the capacity to go onto the LBTS Chamber website and make edits to your page that includes adding take out menus and new hours of operation. For more information, contact Veronica at info@lbts.com.**

Resources For Businesses

Family First Corona Virus Response Act: Includes paid sick leave and free coronavirus testing, expands food assistance and unemployment benefits, and requires employers to provide additional protections for health care workers:

- Establishing a federal emergency paid leave benefits program to provide payments to employees taking unpaid leave due to the coronavirus outbreak,

- Expanding unemployment benefits and provide grants to states for processing and paying claims,

- Requiring employers to provide paid sick leave to employees,

- Establishing requirements for providing coronavirus diagnostic testing at no cost to consumers,

- Treating personal respiratory protective devices as covered countermeasures that are eligible for certain liability protections, and

- Temporarily increasing the Medicaid federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP).

Senate working on larger economic relief package including direct payments to citizens