Dear Members,

We are going through an unprecedented disruption together. But we have been tested before in different ways, and always emerge stronger – and I have no doubt this will prove true once again. I’m writing today with some important updates on things that have been announced over the last few days:

**Small Business Support**
The President announced loans through the Small Business Administration on Thursday evening. The Lt. Governor also talked about those in today’s State press conference. Here is a [great resource page](#) that gives some highlights on this program.

Here in Ohio, the Development Services Agency is helping to take the lead and they have asked that any small business owners who have been affected please send your contact information to the following email address: [BusinessHelp@Development.Ohio.Gov](mailto:BusinessHelp@Development.Ohio.Gov) and they will follow up with you. We are also working to be of assistance here, and if you are needing help regarding this program, please feel free to reach out to Barrett Thomas, Economic Development Director – [bthomas@chooserrichland.com](mailto:bthomas@chooserrichland.com) (please note we are all trying to get familiar with these programs, but we want to help you!)

**Impacted Employee Support**
Your employees may be affected by the temporary restrictions put in place. The Governor’s office also announced several initiatives to help:

- They are broadening current state policy to clarify that individuals that are quarantined by a health professional or by their employer are considered to be unemployed and will not be subject to requirements to actively seek work during the period of emergency.
- This also applies to companies that determine it is necessary to temporarily shut down operations due to the current emergency.
- Ohio currently has a 1-week waiting period before an individual can receive unemployment. In order to expedite the payments to impacted Ohioans, they are waiving the waiting week so that workers eligible for unemployment benefits will receive them for the first week of unemployment.

These points were taken from the [Governor’s Twitter](https://twitter.com/) page, but as soon as more detail is available, I will share it with you.

The [Richland County Department of Job & Family Services](#) also issued a great overview that you can use to share with affected employees if they need to access services – they can do so remotely.

**Unemployment & Businesses**
The Governor also announced some relief for businesses regarding unemployment:

- Because they do not want to penalize individual employers for the impact of this outbreak by increasing future taxes, the costs of these additional benefits will be mutualized.
- ODIFS will also waive employer penalties for late reporting and payments for the next quarter to assist employers impacted by lack of staff availability.

*I will also share more information on these, when available.

**Bar/Restaurant Owner Support**
The Lt. Governor announced a temporary buy-back of high proof liquor products purchased within the last 30 days. The goal of this is to ease cash flow for bar/restaurant owners. Here is a [release by the](#)
**Federal Response**

Additionally, Congress acted late last week to pass legislation to support businesses and families affected by the disruption. Here is a great overview by the US Chamber which breaks down what is included.

**How do you respond?**

The Governor strongly urged business leaders today to consider your response to this urgent situation. Can your employees work remotely? How many? They issued the strongest call yet to have businesses encourage that. I understand that many businesses cannot do that. If that is your case, what steps can you take to ensure the maximum protection of your teams and customers, and ultimately our community? It is clear that there are no easy answers here.

Tomorrow we’ll be sending out a short survey to gauge your initial response to what is happening. I hope that you will take a few minutes to respond so that we can in turn share that. We can learn from each other during this time.

As always, our team is working behind the scenes to figure out how we can pivot and better serve you during this time. I’m interested in hearing from you, how you’re being affected, and especially any ideas that you may have to help! Let’s rally and continue to support each other!

Onward!