

**Economic
Resiliency
Task Force**



Mayor's Economic Resiliency Task Force

Bill Popp and Julie Saupe, Co-Chairs

May 21, 2020

The First Nine Weeks of the ERTF

- ▶ ERTF formed at 9am on March 16
- ▶ Now consists of 24 members representing business organizations, non-profits, and businesses from across Anchorage
- ▶ Staff support for ERTF provided by Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage Community Land Trust



ERTF Mission

- ▶ *To identify and propose immediate actions to local, state and federal policy-makers to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic to Anchorage employers, employees and nonprofits; to identify post-COVID strategies to build economic resilience and improve future response capacity; and to be a credible, accessible source of information and resources for the Anchorage business and workforce sectors.*



ERTF Working Group Structure

- ▶ 7 working groups consisting of ERTF members and community volunteers:
 - ▶ Local Policy- Monica Emerton, Chair
 - ▶ State Policy- Bruce Bustamante, Chair
 - ▶ Federal Policy, Ethan Tyler, Chair
 - ▶ Business Programs and Tactics- Jon Bittner and Jonathan White, Co-Chairs
 - ▶ Workforce Programs and Tactics- Silvia Villamides and Nikole Nelson, Co-Chairs
 - ▶ Minority, Disadvantaged Businesses and Workforce- Heather MacAlpine and Jasmin Smith, Co-Chairs
 - ▶ Communications- Katie Dougherty and Emily Cohn, Co-Chairs



What We Have Learned In The Last 8 Weeks

- ▶ Our business and non-profit community was unprepared for such broad disruption, but rose to meet the situation
- ▶ Huge cash crunch affected broad swaths of businesses and non-profit organizations
- ▶ Coordination of messaging of key information a big gap
- ▶ Confusion a big issue for both businesses and workforce
- ▶ Rapidly unfolding relief efforts challenged by scale of disaster
- ▶ The rapid speed with which information is changing



Shared Recommendations Across All Groups

- ▶ Accessible Assistance Programs:
 - ▶ Grants, not loans
 - ▶ Inclusive of non-profits and sole proprietors
 - ▶ Simplified applications and rapid deployment
- ▶ Waive or defer business fees and taxes where allowable and a moratorium on property tax based foreclosures
- ▶ Support for workforce; rapid unemployment dispersals and retraining opportunities
- ▶ Clear guidelines for businesses and customers, including campaigns to support the use of face coverings
- ▶ Highlight and support community programs designed to help *local* businesses or non-profits



Local Government Recommendations

- ▶ Provide clarity on essential vs non-essential workers and clear guidelines by industry sector for reopening
- ▶ Equal access to broadband to bridge the digital divide
- ▶ Provide informational resources in multiple languages
- ▶ The MOA utilities waive costs for non-profits until federal funds become available
- ▶ The MOA exempt stimulus checks from garnishment
- ▶ The MOA act to avoid the anticipated eviction tsunami as housing protections expire (Rent Relief pilot project)



State Government Recommendations

- ▶ That the state follows the *US Chamber's National Return to Work Plan* when it comes to questions of insurance and privacy
- ▶ Waive commercial use permit and per person fees on public lands for the remainder of 2020; this acknowledges that with the downturn in tourism many of these businesses will not be able to utilize permits to their full financial potential
- ▶ Alaska Co-op Development Center to work with cottage industry to allow for online sales and allow cooperative take-over of retiring cottage industry businesses
 - ▶ The State of Alaska create a single, easy to navigate job portal reference by region, job category, and skill sets



Federal Government Recommendations

- ▶ Expand current legislation to broaden the eligibility for a broader spectrum of non-profit organizations to access relief funds.
- ▶ Adding seasonal business protections and flexibility to relief funds to address needs and seasonal realities of tourism, fishing and construction businesses in Alaska.
- ▶ Reduce, ease or eliminate grant matching requirements for federal grant programs.
- ▶ Allowance for CARES and HEROES funding for State and Municipal revenue replacement.
- ▶ Fully Fund Unemployment Trusts: Increase the federal unemployment insurance reimbursement for self-funded entities to 100% of costs.



ERTF Direct Actions

Communications strategy for all ERTF partners

- ▶ AnchorageStrong website and robust social platforms
- ▶ Text platform - connecting businesses to needed resources and services
- ▶ Key messages delivered
 - ▶ Sharing and promoting all COVID-19 related orders, messages and events from city
 - ▶ Promoting trusted sources for facts and information
 - ▶ Developed and disseminated FAQs re: new laws related to the pandemic
 - ▶ How to apply for loans and grants
 - ▶ Be a hero. Wear a mask!



Looking To The Future

Continue to advise all levels of government-

- ▶ Identify gaps and needs in relief programs
- ▶ Address likely new challenges as they develop:
 - ▶ Processes to reopen the economy
 - ▶ Home mortgages, rental market, homelessness
 - ▶ Key facilities- Convention centers, airport, etc.
 - ▶ Unemployment, reskilling, skills shortages
 - ▶ New investments in Anchorage
- ▶ Anchorage will be a different city in the future. How do we influence that future in a positive direction to make our city more resilient and sustainable?



Thank you!
Questions?

