



🏡 Snohomish County

Economic and Workforce Recovery Task Force Report

July 2020

Findings and Strategies to Support Economic Recovery During COVID-19

Prepared by: Snohomish County Office of Economic Recovery & Resiliency

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on businesses and workers within our local Snohomish County communities, across our region, state, country, and globe. The Economic and Workforce Recovery Task Force was established by Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers and Snohomish County Council Chair Nate Nehring to understand the impact of COVID-19 pandemic to Snohomish County employers and employees in order to develop strategy recommendations the county, cities and partners can implement to support economic and workforce recovery.

The Task Force will undertake the work in three phases, Response, Recovery and Resiliency, stretching from mid-April to late summer or early fall:

Response

The first phase was to respond quickly to identify the needs of businesses that were mandated to close as a result of the pandemic and will remain closed until they are allowed to open under the state's four-phase Safe Start opening strategy.

Recovery

The second phase focuses on businesses as they prepare to a reopen under the Safe Start program as well as those businesses that are already open. Even when open these businesses will require continued support to ensure they can operate successfully.

Resiliency

The final phase of the Task Force's work will look beyond recovery to how the county's economy can be supported to prevent future shocks. Most immediately, preparing the economy if a partial or full shutdown is needed if the virus strengthens this coming winter. And, taking advantage of opportunities for long-term growth and shared prosperity for the county's workforce.

The preliminary findings reflected in this report demonstrate that the economic impact has been widespread. A strong and coordinated response is required to quickly begin the process of rebuilding our economy. These findings and strategies focus primarily on the first two phases of the Task Force's work: response and recovery. Acknowledging that the precise timeline for reopening was uncertain, the Task Force and Advisory Groups worked quickly to identify the needs of businesses and workers and develop strategy recommendations to support business stabilization and reopening.

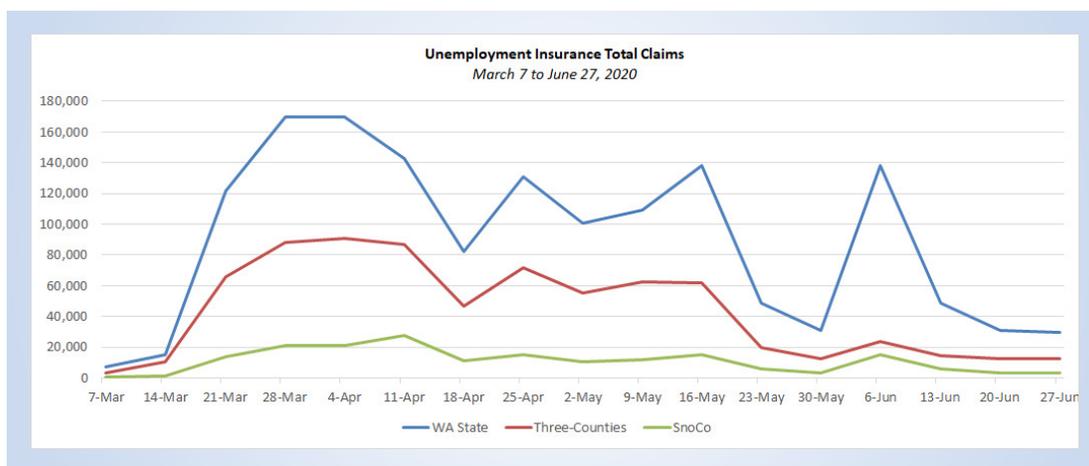
The report has yielded valuable information to the workforce development system in the area of required training to support workers in returning to work and building a more resilient workforce. Moreover, the information collected by Council Members and feedback from Task Force members provide critical, real-time intelligence on labor market conditions and factors that help or hinder business stabilization and hiring.

We would like to thank the Task Force, the Advisory Groups, Snohomish County Council Members, and all the community members who were part of the Advisory Groups for their incredible work during the first two phases of this initiative. The close coordination with local businesses, mayors, labor leaders, tribal representatives, and non-profits was vital for strategy development. The work of the Task Force and the Advisory Groups were crucial to better understand the economic impacts in the county and what strategies are needed to support businesses, workers and residents. Finally, we would also like to thank the staff of the Office of Economic Recovery & Resiliency for their coordination of Task Force and Advisory Group meetings.



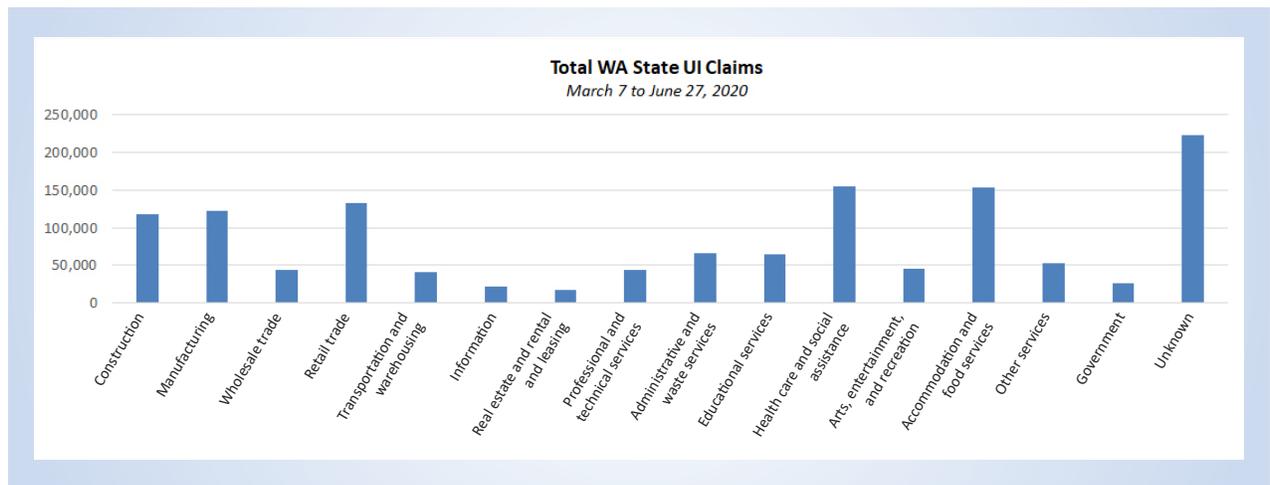
Economic Consequences & Opportunities of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The swiftness of the economic downturn as a result of the shutdown has been devastating. As seen in the graph below, unemployment claims skyrocketed in mid-March as the impact of the economic closure began to be felt. The statewide unemployment rate jumped from 2.8% to 5.1% from February to the end of March and increased to 15.4% at the end of April. By the end of April, Snohomish County’s unemployment rate reached 20.2%, but later fell to 16.2% at the end of May according to the Employment Security Department.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

Workers across Washington State have been greatly impacted by the economic closure. Hardest hit were workers in construction, manufacturing, retail, healthcare, leisure and hospitality, entertainment, and the “gig” economy represented in the “unknown” category. Many of the people who work in these industries belong to minority and diverse communities.



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

Potential Impacts

While the impact to industries and workers provides a snapshot of the economic hardship facing businesses and workers, there will likely be lasting impacts.

- o **Lingering Unemployment:** Depending on the rate of economic recovery, high unemployment and underemployment could last year’s particularly in certain industries.
- o **Higher Poverty Rates:** If the COVID-19 virus lingers, resulting in a longer recovery, the county could see higher poverty levels.
- o **Slower Job Growth:** A potential consequence of the shutdown could be greater automation or the use of Artificial Intelligence technologies in manufacturing. This could impact the number of workers they rehire and hamper job growth.
- o **Road Congestion:** Transit usage may be slow to recover as riders are concerned about social distancing. This could result in more single occupancy vehicle commuting and increased road congestion.

Potential Opportunities

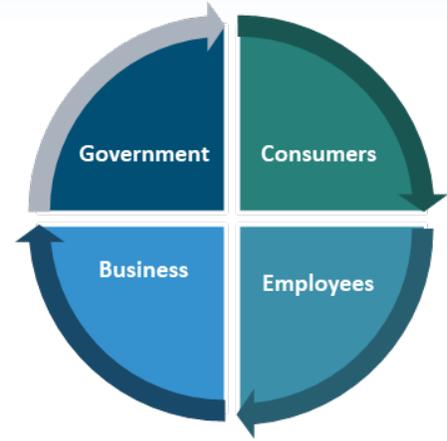
The potential exists for opportunities to arise from the pandemic and economic shutdown that could support recovery and long-term growth in Snohomish County.

- o **Business and Residential Growth:** Remote work has been implemented successfully by many companies. Families may have a growing desire for private amenities to avoid crowds at parks and playgrounds which could lead to growth in suburban and rural communities.
- o **Placemaking and Revitalization:** Growth in Snohomish County cities and towns could spur a demand for more place-making amenities ushering in downtown revitalization.
- o **Manufacturing Growth:** Companies, seeing their global supply chains disrupted, may opt to shorten them or make supply chains more resilient. This could be an opportunity to attract manufacturers to Snohomish County.

Major Findings and Themes

During Task Force and Advisory Group meetings, it was identified early on that economic recovery hinges on providing the necessary tools and resources to businesses and workers to respond to their immediate needs while closed or operating at reduced capacity and then to prepare them for economic recovery.

The challenges we face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are equal parts public health safety and economic recovery. Public health and economic recovery are linked closely together and any strategy or economic reopening plan must address both to be successful.



1 Finding #1: Strengthen Businesses, Workers and Consumers and Prepare for Recovery

Strengthening businesses and supporting working families so they can weather the economic closure and then fortifying them with tools and resources to prepare recovery is of utmost importance. Strengthening businesses, employees, and consumers are mutually reinforcing. Businesses want to open their doors. But while they want to open as quickly as possible, they understand that keeping their employees and customers safe is paramount.

Business Reopening

Strategy & Guidelines: The State of Washington is responsible for the reopening of the economy and their Safe Start opening strategy and supporting guidelines should arm businesses and workers with the information they need to implement health and safety standards to keep employees and customers safe.



Communications: Businesses, employees and consumers talked about the need for clear and timely communication to support reopening. While there are a multitudes of resources available with information, many expressed the need for a “one-stop-shop” of information that provides them with guidelines for reopening, health and safety requirements, training resources, and information about PPE purchasing especially because of the possibility of a second spike.

PPE Training: Some businesses will need Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) purchasing and training to support reopening. Businesses and employees will need to know safety requirements and where they can find training for their employees. They will need to know where they can acquire personal protective equipment, and many businesses will need financial support to obtain the necessary PPE to open their business.



Health and Safety Standards: Businesses believe regular enforcement of standards for PPE use and cleaning are needed to bring in customers and keep their employees safe. Businesses are worried that “bad actors” that don’t abide by the guidelines could jeopardize recovery and set back consumer confidence. Enforcing health and safety guidelines and determining what penalties to enact if businesses do not comply should be considered. Enforcement policies and guidelines should be easy to understand and communicated to businesses, employees, and customers.

Timelines: Most of the Task Force and Advisory Group meetings took place before the state’s announcement about the Safe Start opening strategy. As a result, much of the conversation from businesses centered on when and how opening would occur. While businesses understand that there is difficulty in setting specific timelines, they requested as much clarity as possible for how and when timelines would be established.



The state’s four-phased approach provides businesses with information about who can reopen in each phase, estimated reopening time, and guidance that is specific to businesses about how to reopen. This will allow businesses to develop reopening plans, re-hire employees, and purchase equipment and products so that they are ready when they can open their doors.

Education, Childcare & Support Services

K-12 Education: School reopening and educational attainment were raised repeatedly during the Advisory Group meetings. Many saw this as the critical issue for the county and the state because of its critical role for near-term recovery, long-term economic equity, and its importance for workforce development. For many businesses and employees, having specific and clear guidelines on school reopening is critical for getting people back to work.

Significant concern was raised about how working parents would support their students with home schooling if schools don't open in the fall. If school continues to be online this fall, this could harm our most vulnerable populations since many don't have access to broadband or computers/tablets to access coursework and take full part in online learning. This could further widen systemic inequalities for different racial/ethnic communities throughout Snohomish County.



Continued school closures could negatively impact students' physical and mental health. Not being able to spend time with classmates, friends, and teachers could further enhance a sense of isolation that affects learning and mental development that requires specialized care.

Childcare & After School Care Support: Hand-in-hand with school reopening were numerous concerns about childcare business and after school support organizations such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and others. Much like K-12 education, these services are critical to working families, educational achievement, and workforce development. Moreover, if these organizations remain closed or operate at reduced capacity, it could clearly be an impediment to workers as they return to work. It was agreed that childcare facilities will need clear health and safety guidelines and timetables to be prepared to support business reopening and working families. In addition, these providers will need to instill confidence in families and children that they have the needed health and safety standards in place for a safe environment.



Libraries & Community Centers: Libraries and community centers that provide after school youth programs will be critical to working families. They will also need clear guidelines for safe reopening and operations to support families and economic recovery.

Public Transportation: Public transportation has been hard hit from the pandemic and is a critical service for many working families. It is possible that there will be a reluctance to use public transportation due to health and safety concerns that could negatively impact recovery. Public transportation agencies need to take measures to ensure busses and trains can operate safely to support recovery.

2 Finding #2: Businesses and Workers will Need Ongoing Support during Recovery

Based on the Advisory Groups' findings and Business Needs Assessment results, businesses and nonprofits will continue to need ongoing support even as phased reopening begins.



Marketing Campaigns

Marketing campaigns to encourage shoppers to support their local business is encouraged to bring consumers to local small business to help rebuild communities.

Best Practice Sharing

Businesses are hungry for information about best practices for how to open and what other businesses are doing to prepare. They are particularly interested in approaches and strategies being utilized by major employers as models that could be emulated.

Employee Training

Based on unemployment claims from the Employment Security Department, 32% of claimants in Snohomish County have a GED and 27% have at least some college training. Those with a Bachelor's Degree or higher made up 20% of claims to date. Opportunity exists for upskilling and retraining to prepare these workers to return to existing or new jobs with new skill sets.



Public Spaces

The need for social distancing, health and safety requirements, and economic recovery is an opportunity for cities to reimagine how public spaces are used. Rules, regulations, and permitting processes may need to be adjusted to support social distancing and economic recovery. Streamlining rules, regulations, and permitting process could also support business recovery and aid in job growth.

Property Owners & Tenants

Commercial property owners have been negatively impacted by business closures during the pandemic. This is especially true to property owners that cater to retail small businesses (restaurants, bars, lifestyle and clothing) located within city and town centers and serve as an important component to placemaking in local communities and who provide affordable housing that supports working families.



Housing Support

Families impacted by a layoff of a household member have struggled to pay rent for their housing needs. Stabilizing their housing situation is critical to their health and safety and successfully supporting them in their transition to new employment.

3

Finding #3: Support the County's Most Vulnerable Populations

The Task Force and Advisory Groups recognized that some of the County's most vulnerable populations have been the most adversely and disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.



Persistent Problems

Many workers who have lost their jobs had jobs that made them rely on living paycheck to paycheck. Persistent problems such as homelessness, food insecurity, and access to health care have been further magnified by the pandemic.

Equity & Inclusion

Recovery must include equity and inclusion strategies to ensure disproportionately impacted communities are supported with programs and resources to help them recover.

4

Finding #4: Prepare for An Uncertain Future

Uncertainty was a common theme during the Task Force's and Advisory Group's work. Significant uncertainty exists about when reopening will occur, what it will look like, how successful it will initially be, and how quickly the local economy can return to pre-crisis levels.



Prepare for Future Closures

To prepare for, and help mitigate any potential uncertainty and related impacts, recovery implementation and resiliency planning should consider measures to help prepare the community for potential future closures.

Share & Innovate

Leaders from both the public and private sectors are well-positioned to assist businesses across all sectors by developing and sharing innovative ideas, strategies, and other potential resources that local businesses could utilize for their own purposes.

Look for Opportunities

Fostering a dialogue among local leaders can help to identify and implement both short-term and long-term strategies to capitalize on opportunities to strengthen our local economy and expedite its recovery.

Strategy Recommendations

The strategy recommendations listed were developed from Advisory group and Task Force meetings as well as from Snohomish County's industry sector specialists. The recommendations primarily focus on responding to the economic needs of Snohomish County and preparing for recovery. However, during Task Force and Advisory Group meetings, recommendations surfaced to support building a more resilient economy; one that could better weather the shocks associated with a resurgence of the virus. In addition, strategy implementation will focus on equity and inclusion to ensure all businesses and workers are able to take part in the economic recovery. This includes how to support Small, Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (SMWBEs) as well as workforce training and skill development programs for women and minorities.¹ Finally, strategy implementation will require a broad partner effort throughout the county and the region. Each of the partners listed below along with many others will need to be brought together for recovery to be effective.

Local Partners

Local partners will play a primary role in implementation as they have the expertise and community networks to support strategy implementation. Of these partners, the Economic Alliance of Snohomish County and Workforce Snohomish are examples of two county-wide organizations that have an important role to play in supporting business and workforce recovery.

Regional Partners

Regional partners will be an integral partner to support implementation for recovery. These organizations include Greater Seattle Partners and the Puget Sound Regional Council. They can help coordinate recovery efforts across the Puget Sound region, coordinate best practice sharing, and support requests or applications for Federal funding opportunities.

State of WA

The State of Washington will be an important partner to support reopening and recovery. The guidelines established through the Safe Start program will guide business reopening in Snohomish County and across the state. Moreover, key state agencies and departments such as Commerce and Employment Security Department will hold a crucial role in economic recovery, workforce training and job placement.

Federal Agencies

Federal agencies and departments will be crucial for recovery. Agencies such as the Small Business Administration, Economic Development Administration, Small Business Development Center and others can provide needed funding and support to businesses and local governments to support recovery.

¹ While we recognize this is the language used in government contracting and other economic-related programs, we encourage the term 'minority' be changed to Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).

RESPONSE Strategy Recommendations (Timeline: 0 to 3 months)

These strategies focus on the need to respond quickly to identify the needs of businesses and non-profits who were mandated to close as a result of the pandemic and will remain closed until they are allowed to open under the state's four-phase Safe Start strategy. They are designed to help stabilize a company and support its employees.

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implementer
<p>▶ Snohomish County Small Business Relief, Recovery, and Resiliency (R3) Grant Program (implemented) <i>Grants in amounts up to \$25,000 will be awarded to qualifying businesses.</i></p>	Small businesses	Snohomish County	Workforce Snohomish
<p>▶ First in Flight Fund (Grant program for Aerospace Industry) (implemented) <i>Administer a grant program to help sustain aerospace businesses across the county.</i></p>	Small businesses	Snohomish County	Workforce Snohomish
<p>▶ Response Fund with the Community Foundation of Snohomish County and local partners <i>Resources to organizations in our region working with communities who are disproportionately impacted by coronavirus and the economic consequences of this outbreak.</i></p>	Non-profits who support disadvantaged populations	Community Foundation of Snohomish County	Snohomish County
<p>▶ Extension of a Deadline for Individual Property Taxpayers (implemented) <i>Extends the first-half 2020 property tax deadline to June 1, 2020.</i></p>	Businesses & residents	Snohomish County	
<p>▶ Re-Start Communication Hub <i>Develop and implement a one-stop/centralized communication hub that will push out information across multiple channels to support economic reopening with consistent and relevant information for businesses, consumers, workers and the unemployed.</i></p>	Businesses, workers, consumers, residents, unemployed	Snohomish County	TBD

RECOVERY Strategy Recommendations

(Timeline: 3 to 6 months)

The strategy recommendations in this phase focus on businesses as they prepare to a reopen under the Safe Start program as well as those businesses that are already open. Even when open these businesses will require continued support to ensure they can operate successfully.

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implementer
<p>▶ Social Justice Economic and Workforce Recovery Coordination <i>Coordinate implementation of the Task Force Strategies with the Snohomish County Office of Social Justice to support inclusive and equitable economic recovery.</i></p>	Small, Minority, or Women-owned Business Enterprise (SMWBE) and women and minority workers	Snohomish County Office of Economic Recovery & Resilience	Snohomish County Office of Social Justice
<p>▶ Equity & Inclusion Workforce Training Program <i>Develop training and hiring programs for women and people of color that provides them with the training, skills, certification and support for career pathways in high-demand occupations the region's growing industries.</i></p>	Women and minority workers	Workforce Snohomish	Snohomish County, local universities, colleges, and employers
<p>▶ Equity & Inclusion Employer Training Program <i>Develop training and hiring programs for employers to learn how to create inclusive and equitable workplaces as Snohomish County continues to diversify.</i></p>	Businesses	Workforce Snohomish	Snohomish County Office of Social Justice
<p>▶ Public Transportation Support Plan <i>Develop safety plans for public transportation and implementation that is closely aligned with business reopening. These include Community and Sound Transit safety plans for employees and riders with standards/requirements monitored to promote consumer confidence.</i></p>	Businesses and employees	Community Transit, Sound Transit, Everett Transit	TBD

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implementer
<p>▶ PPE Bulk Buy Program</p> <p>1) Establish a bulk buy program for PPE supplies for distribution to local businesses, child care and after-school facilities to support economic reopening.</p> <p>2) Maintain a database of local PPE suppliers to support local businesses long-term.</p>	All	Snohomish County	TBD
<p>▶ PPE Training</p> <p>Establish a PPE training program for businesses and their employees to support business reopening and recovery</p>	Local businesses and employees	Snohomish County & Workforce Snohomish	Local colleges
<p>▶ Business Best Practice Sharing</p> <p>Develop an on-line best practice resource sharing program to help small businesses implement new health safety requirements for reopening and maintain their business.</p>	Local businesses	Economic Alliance of Snohomish County	Major employers (i.e. Boeing, Microsoft, etc.), Small Business Development Center
<p>▶ “Main Street” Rules & Regulations Streamlining</p> <p>Relax sidewalk and parking strip rules to allow businesses to do café seating or shop outside.</p>	Downtown businesses or retail core	Snohomish County and cities	Local businesses, chambers of commerce, downtown associations
<p>▶ Non-Profit Relief (in progress)</p> <p>Develop a grant program for non-profits that allow funds to be used for operations to support recovery.</p>	Nonprofits	Snohomish County	TBD
<p>▶ State Legislature Support for Economic Recovery (in progress)</p> <p>Bring state legislators to the table/ discussion to support economic recovery.</p>	Businesses and local governments	Snohomish County and cities	TBD

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implementer
<p>▶ Streamlined Construction Permitting & Inspection Review <i>Review and streamline local government's permitting and inspection processes to support construction reopening.</i></p>	Construction companies and local businesses	Snohomish County and cities	Labor and building associations
<p>▶ Small Business Support Network <i>Develop an online small business support network across the county for businesses to share information and best practices.</i></p>	Local businesses	Economic Alliance of Snohomish County, & Sno-Isle Library System	Small Business Development Center
<p>▶ Buy Local Campaign <i>Local communities, chambers of commerce, downtown associations to develop marketing plans to encourage consumers to buy from their local businesses to repair and rebuild communities.</i></p>	Local businesses and consumers	Chambers of commerce; downtown associations	Cities
<p>▶ Food Security <i>Food security plans that are developed to include food supply chains and grocery stores with a focus on delivering food to vulnerable populations.</i></p>	Low-income, vulnerable, or recently unemployed	Snohomish County	Cities
<p>▶ Aerospace Workforce Development <i>Develop existing and attract new talent through apprenticeships and retrain laid off workers. These training programs will have a direct impact on the economy by matching labor with the post-pandemic market need.</i></p>	Aerospace businesses	Snohomish County	Local colleges and apprenticeship programs

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implementer
<p>▶ Military Sector Workforce Development & Training <i>Expand funding to AMTEC and the recently established apprenticeship program. Additional workforce development investment will help to ensure that more and better qualified workers are available for local multi-sector manufacturing jobs so that both individual workers and the local industry will economically benefit.</i></p>	<p>Military-related businesses</p>	<p>Snohomish County</p>	<p>Everett College</p>
<p>▶ Tourism Investment <i>Capital reinvestment in the Evergreen State Fair Park. The Evergreen State Fair Park currently boasts more than \$48 million in positive economic impact annually to Snohomish County and the region.</i></p>	<p>Tourism and leisure businesses</p>	<p>Snohomish County</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p>▶ Energy & Sustainability <i>Provide funding for home repairs for qualifying low-income households. This effort would be the start of a long-term county home repair program, which would support jobs in the local construction industry, help preserve affordable housing in our community, and support those who need help with emergency home repairs particularly if they have been impacted by the COVID-19 economic downturn.</i></p>	<p>Low income households and residents</p>	<p>Snohomish County</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p>▶ Cultural Relief or Arts Fund <i>Allocate funds for production companies to produce safe and distant events in Snohomish County venues, technology grants for local venues to create online events, creative studies funding, aid to institutions or child care to put on creative/art education classes, and craft brewers to stimulate their business.</i></p>	<p>Arts and cultural non-profits</p>	<p>Snohomish County</p>	<p>TBD</p>

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implementer
<p>▶ Tourism Marketing Campaigns <i>Attract local and regional tourists by undertaking targeted campaigns to restore community spirit and pride; assure local residents of a responsible approach to tourism recovery; and reward perseverance of small businesses by bringing patrons safely back into the economy.</i></p>	<p>Arts and cultural nonprofits, county-wide destination and recreation businesses</p>	<p>Snohomish County</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p>▶ Health Safety Protocol Certification <i>Create a certification program for businesses that follow health safety protocols. Many businesses from all industry sectors said this will boost sales and help ensure that the economy restarts in a safe way. Cost will be low to medium due to the FTE time spent on reviewing business procedures.</i></p>	<p>All businesses</p>	<p>Snohomish County Health District</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p>▶ Commercial Tenant Rent Relief <i>Establish a program to provide rent payment relief for small business property owners to support retail small businesses and affordable housing units.</i></p>	<p>Small businesses & affordable housing tenants</p>	<p>Snohomish County</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p>▶ Housing Stabilization <i>Establish a program to stabilize families by assisting eligible households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with rent payment directly to their landlords.</i></p>	<p>Multifamily tenants</p>	<p>Snohomish County</p>	<p>TBD</p>
<p>▶ PPP Loan Forgiveness Outreach <i>Develop a marketing and communication plan for how small businesses can have their Payroll Protection Program loan forgiven.</i></p>	<p>Small businesses</p>	<p>Small Business Administration Small Business Development Center</p>	<p>Community banks</p>

RESILIENCY Strategy Recommendations

(Timeline: 7+ Months)

While the Task Force has not yet begun work on the third phase – resiliency – there were findings and strategy recommendations that Snohomish County and businesses need to look beyond recovery to consider strategies to help insulate the local economy from experiencing future shocks. Specifically, preparing the economy if a partial or full shutdown is necessary should the virus strengthen during the upcoming fall or winter. Moreover, there was a desire among Advisory Group and Task Force members that long-term growth and shared prosperity go hand-in-hand.

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implementer
<p>▶ Snohomish County Small, Minority, or Women-owned Business Enterprise (SMWBE) Program</p> <p><i>Establish the Snohomish County SMWBE program to provide training and certification opportunities to increase small, minority and women-owned business participation in Snohomish County projects and procurement opportunities.</i></p>	Small, Minority, or Women-owned Business Enterprise (SMWBE)	Snohomish County Purchasing	Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Sno-Isle Library System
<p>▶ Strategic Level Thinking & Guidance (implemented)</p> <p><i>Establish a body of public and private sector officials to look longer-term to take advantage of strategic opportunities to strengthen the economy.</i></p>	Countywide businesses and workers	Future Workforce Alliance	Regional and state partners
<p>▶ Delivery Fee Cap</p> <p><i>Consider a cap on 3rd party delivery fees (GrubHub, Postmates, etc.)</i></p>	Restaurants	Snohomish County/cities	TBD
<p>▶ Target Industry Workforce Retraining Programs</p> <p><i>Work with companies within Snohomish County's targeted industries to understand future workforce training needs. Develop training programs to support worker retraining and hiring.</i></p>	Businesses and employees	Workforce Snohomish	Economic Alliance of Snohomish County

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implementer
<p>▶ Supply Chain Recruitment <i>Target company supply chains for business attraction to create jobs and increase supply chain resiliency.</i></p>	Retail, manufacturing, restaurant	Snohomish County	Economic Alliance of Snohomish County, Greater Seattle Partners, State Department of Commerce
<p>▶ Business Liability Legislation <i>Implement safe harbor liability protection for businesses that adhere to health and safety guidelines.</i></p>	Small businesses	State and Snohomish County	Local government
<p>▶ Small Business Technical Support <i>Provide technical support to small businesses for remote work and online sales</i></p>	Small business, retail	Trade groups, chambers and business assn.	Snohomish County and cities
<p>▶ Housing Assistance <i>Continue help for underserved and vulnerable, such as housing assistance and rental assistance.</i></p>	Low-income, vulnerable, or recently unemployed	Snohomish County	Cities and state
<p>▶ Tele-Health <i>Invest in tele-health options with medical and mental health programs targeted toward vulnerable and unsheltered communities.</i></p>	Low-income, vulnerable, or recently unemployed	Snohomish County	State
<p>▶ Food Supply Resiliency <i>Invest in three key pieces infrastructure to maintain a healthy agriculture and food supply sector to include processing/aggregation/distribution, commercial kitchen, year-round indoor farmers markets and food hubs countywide. Consider piloting a project at McCollum Park to validate the concept for countywide implementation.</i></p>	Agri-business and small merchants, consumers	Snohomish County	Local Government
<p>▶ SNAP Benefits Expansion <i>Support expanding local SNAP benefits to include local farmers markets.</i></p>		Snohomish County	Department of Agriculture

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implementer
<p>▶ Telecommuting Strategy & Broadband/5G Deployment <i>Develop and implement a broad-band strategy to help students and employees work and school from home. Deploy broadband or 5G technology to underserved areas of the county.</i></p>	<p>Businesses, employees, residents, schools, students.</p>	<p>Snohomish County</p>	<p>Federal and state governments, private sector partners</p>
<p>▶ Community Volunteer Program <i>Develop and deploy volunteers to support individuals and communities in the event of closures.</i></p>	<p>General public</p>	<p>Snohomish County</p>	<p>TBD</p>

IMPLEMENTATION Decision-Making Framework

To support implementation of the strategies, a subset of the Task Force will be established to evaluate the strategies and sequence their implementation based on the proposed criteria below. This will ensure that strategies that have the broadest impact, leverage available resources and partnerships, and can be developed and deployed quickly at a reasonable cost will be implemented first. Remaining strategies will be sequenced based on their ranking and available funding or support.

Proposed Criteria

Impact (Low, Moderate, High)

- o Demonstrates impact to businesses and workers (job retention, creation, or reinvestment).
- o Leverages new or existing resources and partners to support implementation.
- o Supports a diverse cross section of the county’s population, businesses, and workers.
- o Supports one or more of the county’s designated target industries.
- o Supports living wage of \$16.09 for an individual or \$19.06 for a family of four with two working adults.
- o Supports areas in the county identified as low to moderate income based on census tracts.

Implementation Effort (Low, Moderate, High)

- o Timeline for implementation
- o Estimated cost
- o Sources of funds
- o Staff resources
- o Approval processes

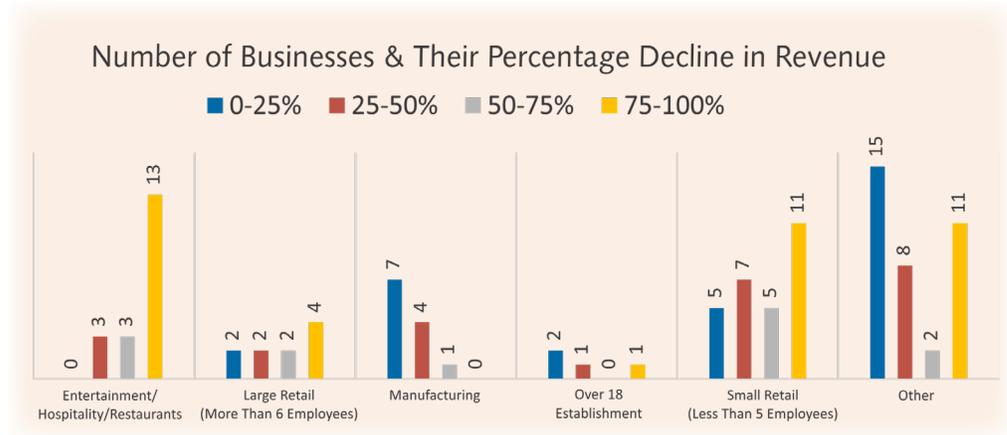
The table below is a matrix that highlights strategies that are low difficulty yet high impact to guide implementation efforts. The darker the shade, the better suited the strategy.

		Implementation Effort		
		Low Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	High Difficulty
Impact	High Impact	1.	1.	1.
	Moderate Impact	1.	1.	1.
	Low Impact	1.	1.	1.

Business Needs Assessment Findings

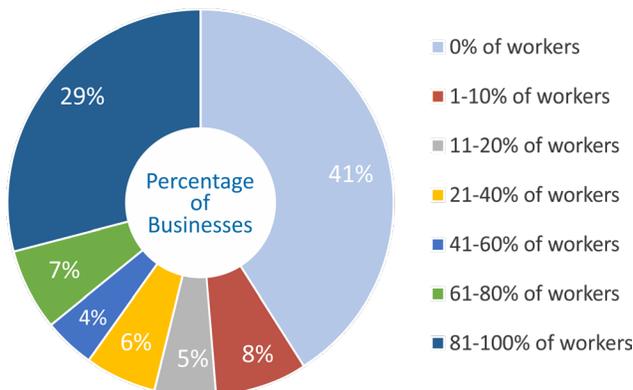
A Business Needs Assessment was distributed throughout the county. The assessment asked both quantitative and qualitative questions about how businesses have been impacted by the pandemic and their ideas to support economic recovery. The survey was taken at the beginning of May 2020 and recorded the changes since the Governor’s lockdown order on March 23, 2020. The feedback received helped to inform these findings and strategies. Below, are aggregated findings based on 121 responses from businesses throughout Snohomish County.

This figure demonstrates the decline in revenue Snohomish County businesses have experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The businesses are divided based on their industry to illustrate the



magnitude of impact by sector. For example, the majority of businesses in the “Entertainment, Hospitality and Restaurants” industry sector have experienced a revenue decline of 75-100%. The category of “Other” include consulting, engineering, real estate businesses and non-profits.

? What percentage of your workforce have you had to lay off or furlough as a result of the crisis?



This pie chart illustrates the percentage of workers businesses have needed to furlough or layoff due to COVID-19. Overall, 59% of businesses have reported that they had to lay off employees. Nearly one-third of businesses have had to furlough 81-100% of their employees. Most of these businesses are from the entertainment and hospitality sector or a small retail business sectors.

? What best practices have you found to be effective as your business/nonprofit has adjusted?



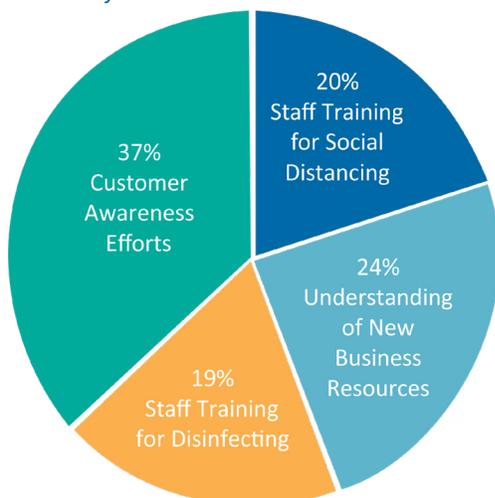
Businesses and non-profits have had to adapt their operations due to the economic closure and many have sought out best practices from peer businesses and major employers to support ongoing and reduced operations.

Businesses and non-profits continue to consider what is needed to reopen their business in order to keep their employees and customers safe. Some businesses are considering reopening gradually and keeping in place existing policies for the time being. There is a recognition that opening may occur with reduced hours, fewer employees, and limited revenues. Some companies are rethinking their business plan altogether for a post-COVID 19 economy.

? How do you see your organization's operations changing as the economy reopens?

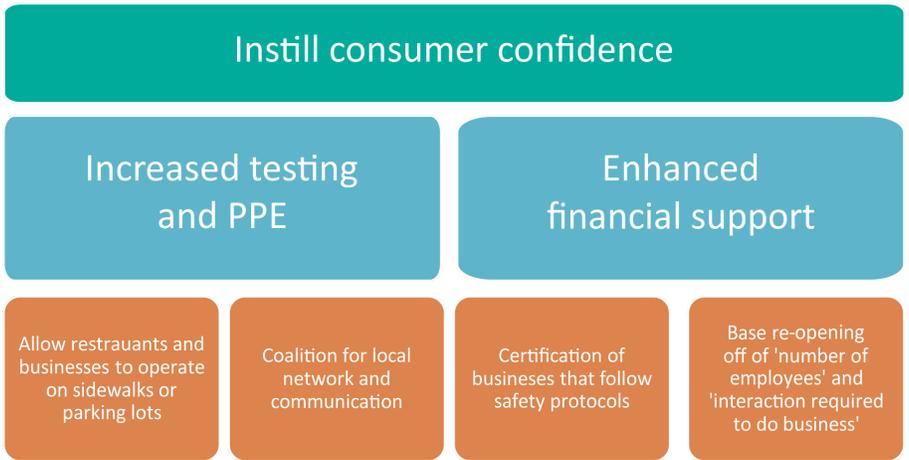


? What does your organization need in the next three months as we look toward an economic recovery?



Plans for reopening are taking shape among local businesses. We need to provide clarity in regards to the availability of resources and training opportunities to help them to keep their employees and customers safe.

? What support will businesses need as the economy restarts?



Businesses want to collaborate and share best practices. They see this as vital for a successful economic recovery. Moreover, they are eager to partner with cities, chambers of commerce, and downtown associations to encourage customers to support local businesses by amplifying messaging that it is safe to do so.

Building confidence in employees and customers that businesses have health and safety strategies in place is key to reopening and recovery. Also critical is the continued support for businesses during recovery such as financial support, testing, PPE and exploring new ways to use public spaces to support social distancing.



Task Force & Advisory Groups

Task Force Leadership

Dave Somers Snohomish County Executive
Nate Nehring (Advisory Group Chair) County Council Chair
Amy Drewel (Co-Chair) MOSAIC, Future Workforce Alliance Vice Chair
Ray Stephanson (Co-Chair) Former Mayor of Everett

Task Force Membership

Dr. Amit Singh Edmonds College
Bill McSherry Boeing
Crystal Donner PERTEET
Barb Tolbert Mayor of Arlington
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Linda Jones Lynwood Chamber
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Ryan Crowther Leadership Snohomish
Ryan McIrvine UW Bothell
Sara Hyatt Hyatt Construction
Shannon Affholter Consultant
Shawn O'Donnell Restaurant Owner (Everett)

Advisory Group Leads

– Council Chair Nate Nehring
District 1
– Councilmember Megan Dunn
District 2
– Council Vice-Chair Stephanie Wright
District 3
– Councilmember Jared Mead
District 4
– Councilmember Sam Low
District 5

Appendix: Advisory Groups Findings and Strategy Recommendations

DISTRICT 1 Advisory Group and Business Sector Meetings

Findings & Strategies Report to the Task Force Leadership

DISTRICT FINDINGS			
Finding	Industry	Who is Impacted?	Implication
Lack of a clear timeline on reopening	All	Community as a whole	Uncertainty for both businesses and consumers
Need for clear guidelines for safety and health requirements upon reopening	All	Community as a whole	Uncertainty for both businesses and consumers
Need for more advanced notice on reopening timelines and requirements	All	Community as a whole	Uncertainty for both businesses and consumers
Lack of resources (specifically for small businesses) including personal protective equipment (PPE), child care, sanitation equipment	Small businesses	Community as a whole	Small businesses will not be able to meet health and safety guidelines without PPE/ sanitation equipment. Child care necessary due to closure of schools.
Identifying the interdependence of different industries and the challenges with industries opening at different times	All	Community as a whole	Businesses are dependent on others that may not fall in their industry sector and will be under pressure if their partners are not open when they are.

Finding	Industry	Who is Impacted?	Implication
Need for streamlined permitting at the local government level to get residential construction moving quickly/make up for lost time	Construction	Construction	Paused residential construction is causing various problems for both the companies involved as well as the residents/ community. Permitting will allow
Lack of consumer confidence once things are opened up	Retail/ hospitality	Community as a whole	Consumers are wary of participating in in-person business as before. This especially hurts restaurants and small shops.
How can Chambers be most helpful in response	All	Business community	Chambers, businesses, and local government may be able to work together to help support response and recovery.
Marketing support for small businesses	Small businesses	Small businesses	Marketing will help build consumer confidence.
Need to open up recreational opportunities to help small businesses	Small businesses: retail/ hospitality	Community as a whole	Recreational opportunities will aid in marketing and boosting consumer confidence.
Certainty on the demand for products (specifically in aerospace)	Aerospace	Aerospace	Manufacturing relies on product supply so certainty will be integral in restarting production.
Apprenticeship programs are hurting	Manufacturing	Workers	Apprentices are integral for setting up the future workforce. Support for them in this time will ensure resiliency in those sectors.
How will housing market be affected after reopening	Real Estate	Community as a whole	Housing market will impact the local community and businesses.

Finding	Industry	Who is Impacted?	Implication
A reliable workforce after businesses are able to open/hire again	All	Community as a whole	Reliable workforce is important for recovery and resiliency.
Taxes and fees will be difficult for businesses attempting to recovery with limited revenues	All	Business community	High taxes will restrict what businesses are able to do in terms of recovery.
Regulations and regulatory burden will make recovery challenging for existing businesses and discourage new businesses from opening post-COVID	All	Business community	Restrictions should be lifted to promote business recovery and attract new and innovative companies.

DISTRICT POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implimenter	Timeline	Cost
Identify a streamlined communication method to businesses	Small businesses	Snohomish County	Have chambers, cities, Health District link to central website	As soon as possible	Med.
Set a more firm timeline for reopening	General Public	State	Snohomish County	As soon as possible	Low
Guidance/Requirements need to be provided sooner	General Public	State	Snohomish County	As soon as possible	Low
Bulk purchasing/purchasing co-op for PPE and sanitation equipment	Businesses	Snohomish County	Cities	As soon as possible/recovery	High
Share success stories of businesses that have been creative	Businesses	Snohomish County	Cities	Recovery/resiliency phase	Low

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implimenter	Timeline	Cost
Reduce the tax/fee burden on businesses where feasible	Businesses	State	County/cities	Recovery/resiliency phase	High
Explore regulatory relief at the state and local level to support business recovery	Businesses	State	County/cities	Recovery/resiliency phase	Med.

DISTRICT 2 Advisory Group and Business Sector Meetings

Findings & Strategies Report to the Task Force Leadership

DISTRICT FINDINGS			
Finding	Industry	Who is Impacted?	Implication
Lack of consumer confidence in businesses providing a safe environment	All	Community as a whole	Lack of consumer confidence which leads to reduced or no sales, slower economic recovery, and less tax revenue. Businesses closing down due to loss of sales which in turn effects the county revenues and the way people see the county as a place to live and visit.
Lack of PPE	All	Community as a whole	Lack of consumer confidence which leads to reduced or no sales, slower economic recovery, and less tax revenue. Residents and visitors will see the county in a negative light as a place that is unsafe to visit due to the chances of getting the virus.

Finding	Industry	Who is Impacted?	Implication
Need for best practices and clear consistent guidelines for PPE and cleaning for both businesses and consumers	All	Community as a whole	Lack of consumer confidence which leads to reduced or no sales, slower economic recovery, and less tax revenue. Lack of a clear focus and message from the county with guidelines makes residents and visitors uncertain as to what is safe and where they can visit.
Broadband issues and difficulty accessing internet-Digital gap	Any group or individual moving to online sales or services or consumers accessing services	All, mostly rural	Disconnected from new and old customers and information. Internet upgrade will improve connectivity and communication which only aids communication between markets and enhances potential business partnerships.
Need for joint information and centralization of information. Need for increased communication of timely info to both businesses and customers.	All	Community as a whole	Further uncertainty. The county and the cities need to have a uniform message to make residents and visitors feel safe and comfortable about being in the county and patronizing businesses.
Inability to plan ahead in case of second wave	All	Businesses that are closed	Inhibiting preparedness mindset and decreasing business morale and confidence
Food supply chain – getting wasted food from Ag to people in need	Agriculture, non-profit	Farmers and hungry people	Wasted food, increase in landfill, increase of hungry people, and revenue loss for farmers. Lack of a plan to use or store the extra food for the good of the residents and use of it to make sure that all the citizens are fed and cared for in a humane way. Use federal funding to buy and distribute food to the needy.

Finding	Industry	Who is Impacted?	Implication
Lack of enforcement or “teeth” of construction worksite cleanliness guidelines	Construction	Construction	Disregarding social distancing and hygiene rules.
Uncertainty of PPE usage and how usage fits and varies into phases timeline	All	All	Lack of confidence in businesses doing the right thing. This goes back to lack of a central message by the county and the city officials.
Businesses haven’t received funding from loan/grant applications	All	Those who have applied and been denied	Can’t make rent/mortgage; layoffs
People of color are disproportionately impacted	All	Communities of color and community as a whole	Inequity
Vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted	All	Low-income and other vulnerable groups	Inequity
Our thriving arts community is in need of physical venues and opportunities to promote music and sell art in a low density setting.	Entertainment/ food /social services	Place making and community as whole	Lower revenues, hungry artists

DISTRICT POTENTIAL STRATEGIES					
Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implimenter	Timeline	Cost
Regular communication lines with public need to be open	General public and consumers	City, Tribes, business associations	County and state	Weekly	Low
Open and frequent lines between government and public where all concerns are covered	Consumers and businesses	Local government	County and state	Weekly updates	low
Prepare businesses to dial up or back depending on forward or backward movement between phases	Phased businesses	State and County	County and city	As phases move	Med.-infor-ma-tional
Establish an information Hub and place to submit FAQs	Businesses NPs	State	County	ASAP, or before new phases are introduced	Med.
Business Certification of Compliance by Health District or other	All	Some authority should approve a business certification	County/ Health Dist./ city	As businesses reopen	Med.
Support Hybrid business structures – Since businesses won't be "normal" again, helping businesses do part online and part in-person	People who can't have all customers at once, lack technical expertise or resources for moving to online	State	County and city	As businesses reopen	Med.

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implimenter	Timeline	Cost
Continued help for underserved and vulnerable, such as housing assistance and rental assistance	People who are low-income, vulnerable, or recently unemployed	All	City	Now	High
Assistance to help people work from home, especially people who haven't historically had access to internet or computers	Manufacturing, healthcare, etc.	County	City	Now	Med.
Relaxing sidewalk and parking strip rules to allow businesses to do café seating or shop outside	Downtown businesses or retail core.	City	County	As weather permits	Low
Creating a database for needs and resources	People needing childcare and other resources	State or county	City	ASAP until schools open	Low
Centralized place to go if you have a FAQ; direct line to ask a question	Consumers and businesses	State	County or city	ASAP	Med.
Creating an app or website where both customers and businesses can go to receive guidelines on best practices to open, customer expectations, opening timelines, and other information.	Customers and businesses	State	County	ASAP	Med.-low

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implimenter	Timeline	Cost
Food security enforcer (oversee food systems and gaps)	Whole community	County	State	ASAP	Med.
For all strategies: Equity and focus on safety for workers from vulnerable populations	All sectors, especially ones with vulnerable people as frontline workers	All	All	Now	Worth every dollar
Consumer confidence through business marketing and outreach. Using online platforms to show that business is safe or has a "Seal of Approval" from Health District/Snohomish County	Retail. Other businesses that are confident that they would pass random inspections	City and county	City and county	As businesses open and pass inspections	Low – mostly business' responsibility to put out info
Centralized county website to source PPE or information.	All	County	State	As businesses reopen	Low – mostly setting up website
Re-design and support a local supply chain	Retail, manufacturing, restaurant	County	Regional organizations	2 to 3 months	High
Countywide Volunteer Management Planning	General public	County	Emergency Management/ multiagency effort-similar to United Way Pilot with Oso	Long term	Med.

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implimenter	Timeline	Cost
Worker retraining, worker layoff avoidance and identify new work skill needs	Unem- ployed workers and businesses in need of staff	State	County, Worksource, other	Long term	High
Safe harbor liability protection	Small businesses	State and county	Local gov.	Next 2 years	Low
Shared work facilities for flexible work.	Small business	Cities	State support		
Small and micro businesses loans or grants to retrofits like plexiglass screens and distancing measures	Small and micro businesses	County	State or large cities	First month of reopen	High
Outreach to new partners: tribes, faith based groups, schools	Whole community	County	Cities	Long term	Low
Support local food structures by investing in farmers markets and food hubs. Support expanding local SNAP benefits or local currency for farmers markets.	Agri- business and small merchants, retail	Cities and county	County and farmers markets, state funding	Year round	Med.
Reimagine retail space that will be newly vacant. Maybe co-working space? Or Housing?	Downtown areas	City and county code changes	Planning departments	Long term	Med.
Provide technical support or programs for businesses that are newly moving online	Small business, retail	Trade groups and business association	Local gov.	Long term	Med.

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implimenter	Timeline	Cost
Bolster unemployment benefits for businesses that are serving fewer clients in the same amount of time; Grants for hazard pay	Salons, non-profits, other businesses that need to reduce crowds	County	State	2 years	Med.
Leniency on grant applications for non-profits – numbers of clients may have been reduced since closed for two months. Allow grants for operational funds	Nonprofits	County	State	1-2 years	Low
Increased access to PPE sources and to a database to share PPE resources	All	County-DEM	State	1-2 years	Med.
Consider a cap on 3rd party delivery fees (GrubHub, Postmates, etc.)	Restaurants	Cities		1 month	Low
Increased funding to Public Health to help with Public Service messaging to ensure compliance and information	Public facing businesses	Health District	Cities, counties, state	Long term	High
Invest in telehealth options for not just healthcare field, but for vulnerable and unsheltered communities and mental health	Healthcare	County	State	Long term	High

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implimenter	Timeline	Cost
Allow hotels to open their food outlets now as long as they follow the guidelines being discussed by the county and cities.	Hospitality	County, cities	State	Now	Low
Tax relief, not deferment, to help responsible businesses	All	Cities/ county	State	ASAP	High
Public forum by Public Health Dept. for health officials to coordinate tracing and to answer questions about reopening, PPE, and other health information	Businesses and community members	County	State	As phases shift	Low – online forum
District-wide cloth mask drives benefiting arts and music communities. Access to proper PPE.	Arts and music communities	County	n/a	As businesses reopen	Med.
Increasing digital information, communication streams, tele-health, online business platforms, with special consideration for leveling inequities	All	State	County	For next 1-2 years	Med. to high
Support rapid rehousing programs, shelters, food banks, farmers market, co-ops, and non-profits that are providing childcare, educational services, senior services and center, housing, and other invaluable resources to the public	All	County	Cities and state	Long Term	High

DISTRICT 4 Advisory Group and Business Sector Meetings

Findings & Strategies Report to the Task Force Leadership

DISTRICT FINDINGS			
Finding	Industry	Who is Impacted?	Implication
A need for well laid out guidelines	Retail/food/recreation/tech		Small businesses prefer specific guidelines to implement regarding social distancing that are uniform.
Education	Retail/food/recreation/tech	Community	Education regarding social distancing to the community as well as education to inform the public that businesses are open and when.
Communication	Retail/food/recreation/tech	Businesses and community	Clear communication regarding what is necessary to keep everyone safe and healthy for employees as well as the public.
Supply chain concerns	Retail/food/recreation/tech	Small businesses	Businesses are struggling to have access to the PPE they need to keep their employees and the public safe. Also, there is concern that their supply chain will not be open when they are able to open.
Reliable internet		Community and small businesses	More work is being done online and reliable internet access is necessary.
Small business grants	Retail/food/recreation/	Employees and small businesses	Higher availability to grants specific to small businesses are needed to cover employee salaries during shut down as well as offset revenue loss during shutdown and a slow reopening.

DISTRICT POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implimenter	Timeline	Cost
Expediting permits for outdoor seating for restaurants	Restaurants/ coffee shops	City	County	Recovery	Low
Bulk buy PPE to sale small businesses to maximize price savings and access to a broader supply chain	Retail/ restaurants/ coffee shops/ entertainment	County	State	Response/ recovery	High
Small Business grants for payroll	Small businesses	Federal	State	Recovery	High
Small Business grants to help with revenue loss while being required to shut down	Small businesses	Federal	State	Recovery	High
Resource Guides informing businesses of all the resources available to them broadly distributed	Small businesses	County	State	Response/ recovery	Low
Speed up approval process for high speed internet cells	Tech	City	County	Recovery/ resiliency	Med.

DISTRICT 5 Advisory Group and Business Sector Meetings

Findings & Strategies Report to the Task Force Leadership

DISTRICT FINDINGS			
Finding	Industry	Who is Impacted?	Implication
<p>▶ Lack of PPE Elective non-emergency services shut down – 75% drop in revenue</p>	Hospital (Evergreen Monroe)	Community as a whole	Affects health of community
<p>▶ Lack of clear plan moving forward Opening at 50% may be challenging as well</p>	Hospitality	Overall economic impact to small business owners and cities	Businesses closing, less tax base for cities
Guidelines on PPE in offices, sanitation requirements etc.	Cities, manufacturing, retail, construction etc.	Across the spectrum – government to private sector	Without clear direction hard to develop a plan to open and move forward. It is also more challenging for smaller businesses.
Consistent guidelines across cities and counties.	Retail, manufacturing, construction	Businesses throughout the state	Lack of consistent guidelines from city to city will make it difficult for businesses in multiple jurisdictions to comply
Indoor vs. Outdoor activities – clear guidelines for each	Hospitality, construction	Restaurant and hospitality industry.	Allows for more clarity as phases progress.

DISTRICT POTENTIAL STRATEGIES					
Strategy	Target	Lead Implementer	Support Implimenter	Timeline	Cost
Clarity, road map, fairness and equity	Advocacy for our small businesses to allow them to get up and running in safe manner as quick as possible	County	Cities	As soon as possible	Low
Bringing state legislators to the table/discussion	Businesses across the board	County	Cities	Possible roundtable discussion with our state legislators on their plan to help open up WA	Low
Enforcement of requirements for reopening	Affects all levels of business	County, state, Health District	Cities	Not sure what this looks like	High
Supporting the start of new businesses	New Businesses	EASC, Economic Advisory Group	County	Resiliency phase	Med.

Additional Thoughts

- o Businesses in Snohomish County and East County are hurting. We need a clear and safe plan to get our businesses open.
- o Need to be talking with our businesses on their thoughts on what would work in their industry.
- o Businesses are frozen – we could lose a lot of companies/small businesses during this time.
- o Hard to do strategic planning and budgets – Businesses cannot move forward with plans and budgeting when there is no plan to reopen and there is significant concern the state could shut down things again in the fall.
- o Best way to communicate – get information out to the local chambers and cities.