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Survive. Revive. Thrive.

COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan

Accepted by the BDBMC Board of Directors – May 20, 2020

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Survive. Revive. Thrive.

COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan

Introduction

No one could have predicted as we began 2020 that a global pandemic would bring all communities and economies to a stand-still. Yet that's what Martin County, and its sister communities across Florida and the U.S., have responded to since the World Health Organization and Center for Disease Control and Prevention declared a pandemic relating to the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Martin County began implementing preparations to address the serious public health threat in late January 2020 and on March 16, 2020 Martin County issued its Declaration of State of Local Emergency relating to COVID-19.

Our Strategic Framework

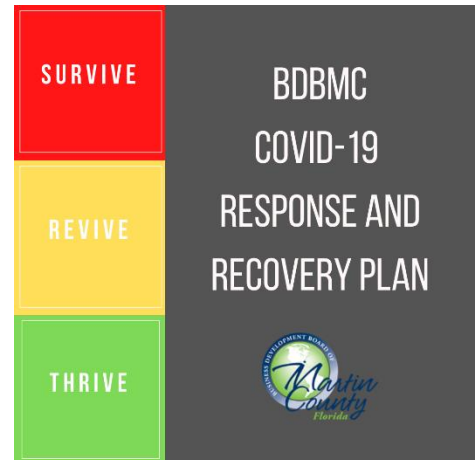
As the Business Development Board of Martin County (BDBMC) continues to support and assist local business owners, managers, executives and entrepreneurs through (and beyond) COVID-19, we will seek to align our time, energy, leadership and resources to the following principles:

1. We will seek to mitigate losses in the number of employers and local jobs.
2. We will promote local hiring and assist in locals finding their next great job and career.
3. We will strengthen Martin County's entrepreneurial support system and increase small business and entrepreneur training.
4. We will boost, promote and encourage local funding for business innovation, reengineering and resiliency.
5. We will advocate for more local buying by anchor institutions, residents and businesses.

What We Are Doing to Help

Based on these principles, we need to respond and adapt to the changing needs of our businesses and economy as we journey through the COVID-19 pandemic together. What we did and executed early on may not be what is needed today and tomorrow.

So, as we continue to evolve our plan and put our principles into practice, we believe we need to consider at least three phases and time periods which may be further altered as health and economic conditions change and executive orders are issued, modified or suspended.



1. **Survive** (March 16 – May 31, 2020): Initial response to the health crisis, near-term plan to serve local businesses and workers and prepare for and help support steady staged reopening from Safer at Home orders. Proactive touchpoints, regular communications, initial assessment of impacts, identification of needed business assistance and perspectives on local policies. (Florida’s Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step Association: Phase I)
2. **Revive** (June 1 – December 1, 2020): Continued focused efforts to support local businesses and companies through account management system; new B-2-B and B-2-C campaigns; industry interventions; advocacy for new and reauthorized tools and business-friendly policies and regulations with partners. Community economic data monitoring initiated. (Florida’s Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step Association: Phase II and III)
3. **Thrive** (December 2, 2020 - beyond): Community economic data monitoring continues. New place marketing and industry expansion strategies started along with other FY 2021 Business Plan initiatives.

We have multiple programs, initiatives and tactics to support each one. While these represent initial strategic thinking and actions, we want our efforts to be sustainable in the future and serve as a new level of service or foundation for our work to build a more resilient economy for all in Martin County, Florida.



Former nurse Karen Argus opened PuroClean of Stuart just prior to pandemic and with assistance from the **Business Development Board** and the **Florida Small Business Development Center @ IRSC Chastain Campus** in Martin County.

Survive

(March 16 – May 31, 2020)

SURVIVE

During this period, the BDBMC has sought to be proactive with top employers, prospects, leads, grantees and incoming callers while staying connected to its economic partners who were also executing robust communications strategies with its constituents, members and key contacts.

Additionally, the BDBMC took and is taking the following actions:

1. Promoted **Martin County Biz Team Headquarters** and **Hotline** at the BDB – 772.221.1380.
2. Established the **Martin County Biz Hub @ bdbmc.org** as the “go to – one stop shop” for local businesses and companies to stay in the know, get assistance, learn best practices and access safety guidance and guidelines for workers and customers.



3. Initiated an **Outbound Call Strategy** to local businesses, top employers, industry leaders, partners, prospects, clients and grantees to touch base and help with specific requests.
4. Introduced **Small Talk**, a Wednesday @ 12 noon online series to support businesses with their tactical and strategic decisions during (and beyond) COVID-19.
5. Conducting **Weekly Economic Partner Calls** on Thursdays @ 10:00 a.m. to stay connected on current economic conditions, business trends, messaging, services and more to help our community and economy.
6. Distributing **Weekly United Economic Leadership e-blasts** on Thursday with the latest news and resources for local businesses and companies.
7. Publishing **Stories of Triumph** on Fridays showcasing Martin County business leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs who are ‘doubling-down’ on their determination, creativity and ingenuity in pursuit of solutions that benefit the entire community which keeping our economy alive.

8. With the help of economic partners, conducted the **Martin County COVID-19 Biz Survey** (April 28 – May 4) to learn how Martin County business owners, managers, entrepreneurs and leaders were managing through COVID-19, what advice they had on reopening and the assistance they needed moving forward.

Initial Economic Data, Metrics and Projections

Unemployment and Job Losses

MC Unemployment Level: 3,138 (Source: Florida LAUS Report – April 17, 2020)

MC Unemployment Rate – March 2020: 4.2%

MC Unemployment Rate – March 2019: 3.2%

MC Unemployment Rate: February 2020: 3.0%

Best Period: February 2020 (3.0%)

Worst Period: January 1992 (12.6%) (Source: Florida LAUS Historical Report)

Job Loss Projections by Urban.org for Martin County: 6,935 jobs – primarily low-income jobs in:

- Accommodations & Food Service: 1,867
- Retail Trade: 1,023
- Construction: 890
- Healthcare – Social Assistance: 774
- Other Services: 537

Business Losses

Martin County to date: Actual impact unknown at this time – credible source needed

Projections by Brookings Institution as of April 4, 2020:

- Number of small businesses in industries with immediate risk: 1,359
- Number of small businesses in industries with near-term risk: 1,645

Commercial – Industrial Vacancy Rates

Flex: 2.8% Retail: 3.7% Industrial: 9% Office: 7.5% (Source: CoStar, May 2020)

Revive

REVIVE

(June 1 – December 1, 2020)

This is a key period for helping local small businesses who were closed during Phase I with their reopening; to continue helping key employers and industries; to help build community confidence in returning to more active levels following the phased lifting of “Safer at Home” orders and to try and save restaurant, retail, healthcare and construction businesses which often provide first-jobs and offer upward mobility for workers who have little post-secondary education or training.

In order to rebuild consumer confidence of local services, economic partners will need to increase communications and create promotions designed to increase B2B and B2C interactions and business activities.

Also, new efforts are suggested by the BDBMC and its partners to support the return of workers who either worked remotely or took some level of leave to provide either daycare and/or at-home, online learning when schools were officially closed effective March 30.

Lastly, the education campaign - associated with the August 18, 2020 voter ballot referendum to reauthorize the economic development tax exemption incentive program - has synergy with this section of the recovery plan and messaging should be synced to support more local employers and economic opportunities.

Next steps and proposed actions

1. Expand the City of Stuart’s **“We’re Ready” visual campaign county-wide** designed to promote merchants, restaurateurs, service providers and others who have committed to following CDC guidance for cleaning, disinfecting, social distancing and other daily habits.

Additional Resources Needed: \$5,000

2. Identify suppliers and sources for **personal protection equipment (PPE)** for use by businesses and companies.
3. Support and advocate for the **reestablishment of our daycare system** (reduced capacities impact the ability of some families to return to work) and if needed help to identify temporary new spaces. Additionally, advocate for the elimination of any barriers for family and enterprise-level reimbursements.

4. Develop an **integrated promotion and communications plan for Survive. Revive. Thrive** Response and Recovery Plan that is designed to grow market penetration in aiding and assisting local businesses and companies by boost viewership on MC Biz Hub and Small Talk and the use of the MC Biz Hotline and Open for Business.

Additional Resources Needed: \$15,000

5. Start and support a new **MC Small Business blog** that highlights best practices and low-cost solutions to local small businesses seeking to improve their business development, operations, management, people, marketing and other key business systems and strategies.

Additional Resources Needed: \$5,000

6. Work with partners to engage the community in a reimagined **MC Local** effort intended to build community pride and inspire more residents, workers, leaders, visitors and institutions to source and procure more Martin County products and services.

Additional Resources Needed: \$5,000

7. Formulate and implement the “**Give Us 5**” initiative which asks Martin County professionals in the areas of accounting, finance, capital, employment law, architecture, commercial real estate, construction, marketing, social media, communications, procurement and technology to step forward and donate their time and talents to local micro and small businesses in the defined eligible industries who need extra assistance.

8. Designate **in-person or virtual “office hours”** with area Chambers of Commerce to provide greater access to the MC Biz Team and available small business and entrepreneur assistance.

9. Work to develop with public, philanthropic, banking and financial partners, a new **MC Small Business Innovation Challenge and Fund** to help small businesses in defined eligible industries innovative, transform and build more resilient businesses in Martin County.

Additional Resources Needed: To be determined

10. Work with workforce development, staffing, education and non-profit partners to **accelerate and intensify career services programming and job placement** activities in Martin County in order to put people back to work in good, local jobs and to keep local talent here and working including high-schoolers, college students (and graduates) and encore workers (age 50+).

Additional Resources Needed: \$2,500

11. For businesses, non-profits and public sector entities without the ability to return to pre-COVID-19 staffing levels, work with Americorps, Senior Corps and other local volunteer corps to provide **temporary community talent** for a short-term period or special project.

12. Help to identify and support business-friendly policies and actions and **rebuild the 2010 Job Creation toolkit**.

13. Work with partners to educate Martin County voters about the August 18 ballot item for the **reauthorization of the economic development tax exemption** program.

14. Design and publish the **Martin County Economic Dashboard** and share comparative data.

Thrive



(December 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)

The “Thrive” section of the plan intends to broaden efforts to grow local businesses and industries that provide good jobs and tax base to our community so the quality services we expect like safe streets, good schools, diverse recreational and outdoor spaces, modern infrastructure and more can continue to be provided by the public sector.

Next steps and proposed actions*

1. Begin a **digital marketing and social campaign** directed to East Florida owners, executives and entrepreneurs to promote Martin County as an emerging business destination for their new or expanding operations.

Additional Resources Needed: \$10,000

2. Create a **medical, healthcare and information technology business recruitment strategy** which builds on the reputation and investments of our healthcare and technology sectors.

Additional Resources: To be determined

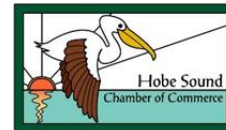
3. Attract **new in-area entrepreneurial services and programs** to Martin County and help host or attract entrepreneurial thought leader events.

4. Develop a strategy with the Martin County Office of Tourism and area hotels and venues to attract **new regional, state and corporate meetings and business visitors** to Martin County.

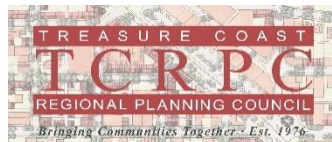
Additional Resources Needed: \$2,500

* Included in BDBMC FY 2021 Business Plan + Budget

The Business Development Board of Martin County
is proudly funded and supported by:



The **Survive. Revive. Thrive. Response and Recovery Plan** is also supported by:



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