

LA COUNTY ECONOMIC RESILIENCY TASK FORCE SETS SIGHTS ON JULY 4 REOPENING



Los Angeles, CA (Tuesday, May 19, 2020)

L.A. County's Economic Resiliency Task Force is developing fast-track plans for economic reopening and recovery by July 4, as industry work groups—in diverse areas ranging from bioscience, hospitality and education to sports, entertainment and the arts—forge ahead with concrete proposals for resuming operations safely.

The proposed timetable was unveiled during the task force's second meeting, which was held today and included a [presentation by the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation](#) that underscored the high stakes and urgency of the local economic situation as the COVID-19 crisis continues.

Bill Allen, president of the LAEDC, said there have been more than 1 million unemployment claims filed in L.A. County to date. More than 75% of the projected job losses are in positions earning an average of \$50,000 a year or less, with restaurants and retail industries hit the hardest.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Barger, the task force chair, said a safe reopening is needed as soon as possible. "I understand the urgency to reopen and know many of the experts the County has assembled for this task force have been working hard to develop safe and efficient plans to revitalize their sectors as early as next month," Barger said. "I remain focused on working with industry leaders and health officials to safely make way for Los Angeles County to reopen by the Fourth of July."

The hearing included presentations from 13 industry representatives, who described the impacts of COVID-19 on their sectors. Jerry Greenberg, representing the restaurants/leisure/hospitality sector, reported that 80% of restaurant jobs have been lost. Pat Niemann, representing corporate business, discussed the consequences of reopening delays and the dangers of long-lasting unemployment. Donna Langley, film and entertainment representative, reported that the industry's 890,000 film and entertainment employees were for the most part not working and noted that this unemployment trickled down to small business vendors as well.

Though each sector reported specific impacts, some common critical needs emerged in the meeting, including rapid but safe reopenings and customized guidance and health/safety protocols for sectors. Several members expressed the desire for new public-private partnerships and revenue streams to create jobs.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, the task force's vice chair, thanked the task force members and recommended using the LAEDC report as a roadmap for the work ahead. "It should spur discussion and guide us on what we face here in the County in all segments of our society, whether it's education, healthcare, entertainment, workforce development, or safety for our employees," she said. "We can move through this cautiously and expeditiously."

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas said that strategies for reopening should pay special attention to underserved and disadvantaged communities, including communities of color. "We can construct a much brighter future for all of us in Los Angeles County," he said, "if we focus on equity *and* prosperity."

Supervisor Sheila Kuehl noted the critical importance of public cooperation as we move closer to re-opening. "Our ability to re-open depends on a very high level of cooperation from the public. If it weren't for the public's willingness to practice social distancing, wear face covers and take necessary precautions, we would not be in a position to begin to plan a re-opening, and our ability to meet our goal of reopening as fully as possible as quickly as possible is dependent on each and every resident of this county doing their part to protect their own health, the health of their family and their community," Kuehl said.

Supervisor Janice Hahn said it's essential to get small businesses up and running. "The longer we stay closed in certain sectors, particularly small businesses and restaurants, the odds are that they will not be able to come back," she said. "I feel that we have to get to the point that we learn to live with the virus. We cannot stay locked down forever. My hope is that this task force will bring forth real plans for reopening these sectors that our Department of Public Health can agree on and present to the governor."

The task force's next meeting is scheduled for June 2.

Economic Resiliency Task Force Sector Representatives

1. Arts and Culture: Tim Dang, USC
2. Business - Corporate / Manufacturing: Pat Niemann, Ernst & Young
3. Business - Small: Linda Griego, MLK Community Health Foundation and Griego Enterprises, Inc.
4. Commodities / Goods Movement: Mario Cordero, Port of Long Beach
5. Education: Dr. Barry Corey, Biola University
6. Faith Organizations: Jackie DuPont-Walker, African Methodist Episcopal Church
7. Film / Digital Media: Jeff Shell, NBCUniversal
8. Foundations / Nonprofits: Regina Birdsell, Center for Nonprofit Management
9. Healthcare / Bioscience: Dr. Hector Flores, Adventist Health White Memorial
10. Infrastructure Development / Construction: Fran Inman, Majestic Realty
11. Labor: Ron Herrera, LA County Federation of Labor
12. Restaurants / Leisure / Hospitality: Jerry Greenberg, Sugarfish.
13. Sports / Entertainment: Casey Wasserman, LA 2028

The Economic Resiliency Task Force was created by a board motion by Supervisors Barger and Solis, and unanimously adopted on April 28, 2020. A copy of that motion can be found [here](#).