

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MOTION

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the State of California has developed a 4 stage plan to reopen the economy. We are now in early Stage 2, where retail, related logistics and manufacturing, office workplaces, limited personal services, outdoor museums, child care, and essential businesses can open with modifications. The state is issuing guidance to help these workplaces reopen safely and the County of Los Angeles has also issued public health guidelines that all businesses must comply with.

According to data released by the Federal Reserve, many small businesses were struggling with funding shortfalls and financial challenges even before the coronavirus pandemic hit, leaving them with little cash on hand to weather the slowdown caused by the virus. Many small businesses also don't have traditional banking relationships, which can make it difficult to apply for and receive financial assistance. If the economic turmoil caused by the pandemic lasts until Labor Day, more than 6 in 10 small businesses could be in danger of failing, an April survey by the National Federation of Independent Business found.

As the State, County, and City develop and expand reopening guidelines, small businesses need guidance in how to properly comply when reopening. As federal and state financial assistance programs become available, the City has provided several programs to help small businesses navigate the programs. The Economic and Workforce Development Department has provided assistance through the BusinessSource Centers. However, this work can be expanded to include assistance on safely navigating best business practices as guidelines are issued and expanded. Small businesses need a centralized place to receive information as it relates to reopening as well as resources to keep their businesses running during and after the pandemic. Dedicated staff, such as business development liaisons from other departments, such as the Department of Transportation, Bureau of Engineering and the Department of Building and Safety, can also help assist small businesses as they figure out new accommodations and rules when reopening.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Economic and Workforce Development Department with the assistance of the Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Engineering, the Department of Building and Safety, and any other relevant departments, be instructed to create an "Office of Small Business Recovery" to provide a one-stop shop for business owners to assist them with navigating the various business assistance and financial services programs offered by the different levels of government as well as educating them with proper reopening protocols and connecting them to available resources.

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