

Updates and Discussions

- **Staff Updates**

- City staff are developing plans for the acquisition and distribution of supplies (thermometers, face coverings and hand sanitizer) for small businesses and non-profit organizations. Staff also continue to update the COVID-19 website with information and programming and are developing preliminary recommendations for workforce development and small business assistance to support with federal COVID-19 relief funding.
- County staff are also working on supply distribution planning. In addition, 251 no-interest loans have been approved through its partnership with LiftFund. Bexar County has also launched a rental assistance program, providing 1-3 months of rental assistance for Bexar County residents outside of the San Antonio city limits.

- **Workforce Development**

- Adrian Lopez, CEO of Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA), presented detailed data on unemployment claims in the region. Geographic coding indicates a strong concentration of claims in the northern areas of the city; Although specific data is unavailable, this could also be an indication of the lack of digital access in other areas. Workforce centers remain closed, which may also contribute to the lower unemployment claim numbers in certain areas. Women have filed slightly more unemployment claims than men. Claimants' educational background ranges widely, however 36% of claimants have a high school diploma or equivalent. Accommodations and food services represent 26% of the unemployment claims.
 - WSA secured \$1.3 million for disaster relief efforts, \$2 million for dislocated workers, \$17 million for childcare for essential workers, and funds for childcare cleaning supplies. WSA continues to seek funding, including \$250,000 to provide approximately 50 residents with skills development training and \$487,000 to provide rapid response services via virtual appointments.
 - It is critical that WSA shift away from unemployment claim support (primarily TWC responsibility) and refocus on jobs and career opportunities. WSA will formally announce the disaster relief funding and will begin automated calls to unemployment claimants to re-engage and connect them with available services. Outreach efforts will also include paid media and coordination with local elected officials and organizations to communicate resource availability.
 - Approximately 80% of unemployment claimants are earning more now, but this will end after July. Many previous jobs will no longer exist and current job openings in the region (approximately 14,000) will not be enough for the approximately 167,000 unemployed residents. Training may be the most appropriate next step for many residents. However, training providers can easily be flooded with demand.
 - Unemployed residents need a variety of opportunities, including upskilling in demand occupations, high school equivalency, pre-vocational training, soft skills and job readiness training, professional certificates, work experience and job matching.

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- Mid-to-long term strategies will focus on employer-driven partnership within target industries, and bringing together education, economic development, workforce systems, and community organizations to identify and collaboratively meet the workforce needs.
- Career pathways, including formal training, apprenticeships and industry credentials should be developed collaboratively and with a desired outcome of participants entering the workforce.
- Romanita Matta-Barrera, Executive Director of SA Works, described the collaboration between UTSA, Texas A&M San Antonio (and Ag. Extension) and Alamo Colleges to inventory available continuing education opportunities, including online training and credentials, to enhance individual employability skills across all education and professional skill levels. These offerings would be at no or low-cost, but some may also require funding support. WSA staff are the first to receive full details on these offerings, but these opportunities will also be available to other workforce development organizations.
- Federal funding should be maximized in smart and effective ways. Short-term funding can support service gaps in the existing ecosystem but cannot address long-term community training needs. In addition, wraparound support services, including housing, transportation, childcare and digital access, are critical for many residents to successfully re-enter the workforce and/or complete training. Siloed initiatives disconnected from the broader strategy should be avoided.
- The lack of childcare remains a challenge for many residents, although WSA provides approximately \$70 million annually, with an additional \$17 million provided for essential workers. Additional solutions are under consideration at the state level.

Action Items

Item	Status	Lead
Research how to facilitate increased local public sector purchasing to support local businesses.	<p>Op-ed draft will be distributed to the working group on Friday for updates and input.</p> <p>SAEDF will provide a list of the top 100 largest employers as an outreach list to request these companies pledge to increase spending with local businesses.</p> <p>Marketing efforts can highlight the estimated spending capacity from the major companies encouraged and/or committed to increasing purchases from local businesses.</p>	Commissioner Chico Rodriguez and Mayor JR Trevino

Referrals to Other Working Groups

- No new referrals to other working groups.