

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS AND
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June 9, 2020

**Development of the Los Angeles County Pandemic-Compliant Businesses and
Workers Partnership Program**

Los Angeles County is committed to rebuilding and sustaining a high quality of life for its residents and businesses. The COVID-19 public health emergency has impacted Los Angeles County residents in every city, locality, and neighborhood. The economic impacts of this crisis are unfolding in real-time as jobless claims are at a two-year high and are expected to climb as many businesses remained closed and others attempt to adapt to the changing landscape. As we struggle with the COVID-19 global pandemic and its effects on our economy, health, and everyday lives, we must do everything we can to respond and help businesses recover. Small businesses are the backbone of the County economy. According to data from Dun and Bradstreet as of May 2020, there are at least 434,645 businesses in the County that employ less than 100 employees. We understand that the relaxation of the Safer at Home order and the accompanying public health guidelines may present challenges for businesses as they seek to re-open safely and adjust to the new normal.

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As Los Angeles County takes steps to re-open business enterprises, a significant factor to consider is availability of and access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – both for the protection of employees and to instill consumer confidence. Since the onset of COVID-19 in the United States, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has instructed employees to follow policies and procedures for the use of PPE while conducting everyday tasks including when cleaning and disinfecting. Essential businesses such as grocery stores, hospitals, and pharmacies have operated successfully throughout this crisis. Using a proper set of protocols and tools, including appropriate distancing, sneeze guards, gloves and masks, screening upon entrance, funding sick leave for employees, and deep cleaning where required, businesses have been able to retain consumers. Companies that follow those protocols now know they can operate, not with zero incidents of illness, but with the ability to assure employees they are safe.

The challenge will be bringing consumers back. Consumer spending is two-thirds of the United States GDP. Our confidence in our ability to interact with others while staying healthy has been diminished. Absent a vaccine, businesses will have to find a way to convince consumers to shop or eat out, to travel, or go to a concert or a game. Moreover, as the County works to implement its Sustainability Plan and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045, we cannot undo the strides we have made toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions throughout the pandemic. It is imperative that public transit riders can return with confidence, and public transit agencies assure commuters that they can safely be transported to their destination.

Though individual states and local jurisdictions are moving towards phased re-opening, the issue regarding the scarcity of PPE has not been addressed. The mandate

to require PPE for staff has left businesses with the difficult decision to remain closed or open at low capacity due to the lack of financial resources to purchase sufficient PPE to keep staff and clients safe. Hence, jurisdictions across the nation have made it a priority to assist small businesses in accessing PPE. The County of San Bernardino has launched a small business PPE program, COVID-Compliant Business Partnership Program. Businesses certify compliance with all health orders in exchange for a modest grant from the County to reimburse and/or offset costs and impacts directly related to complying with COVID-19 related business protocols. Additionally, San Bernardino County is certifying businesses are complying with local and state public health guidelines.

Moreover, the recent death of George Floyd and related nationwide peaceful protests are a testament to the injustices, systemic racism, and violence that Black communities all over the country experience every single day. In addition to feeling the pain and frustration of those who are exercising their right to protest peacefully, we also share the pain and frustration of the small businesses that have been impacted by these protests. A handful of people using the public dissonance to vandalize businesses are violating the rights of other hard-working Angelenos and small business owners, that due to the coronavirus pandemic are already struggling to stay afloat. These businesses fuel our economy and provide much-needed jobs that support countless families throughout our community. One in three Angelenos are foreign-born immigrants, and one-third of Los Angeles County's \$700 billion economies is attributed to them. Two-thirds of "Main Street" businesses in L.A. County are immigrant-owned and run. Businesses across the County, including those in unincorporated areas like East LA, experienced looting and property

damage just as they were allowed to re-open their doors. These crises behoove our Board to identify resources to made available to our impacted businesses and workers. As Los Angeles County moves towards re-opening and establishing a new normal, it is imperative that small businesses are provided with the support they need to access PPE, and to keep staff and clients healthy while safely re-opening.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer, in partnership and consultation with the Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), Acting Director of the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), Director of the Department of Public Health (DPH), relevant sectors from the County's Economic Resiliency Taskforce and the Director of Office of Emergency Management, to report back within 14 days with recommendations and an implementation plan to establish the Los Angeles County Pandemic-Compliant Businesses and Workers Partnership Program to support our local small businesses and workers help ensure ongoing compliance with State and County Health orders and guidelines. The program shall:
 - a. Provide up to \$3,000 grants to fund up to 20,000 eligible small businesses with less than 100 employees, with the expectation that businesses use the funding towards personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitization materials, and other COVID-19 related costs;
 - b. Provide support and technical assistance to all eligible County businesses and sectors seeking to become COVID Compliant Partners including non-

profits, non-government organizations, community and faith-based organizations, health clinics in underserved areas, and small to medium manufacturing operations, including the garment industry and workers;

- c. Reimburse and/or offset costs and impacts directly related to complying with COVID-19 related business protocols;
- d. Require businesses to demonstrate compliance with State/County public health orders and incorporate safety and social distancing practices and measures in their business operations;
- e. Provide businesses deemed Pandemic-Compliant with a certification which they must display at their business locations. Business names should also be published on a publicly available website;
- f. Serve businesses Countywide, with a particular emphasis on prioritizing resources and assistance to businesses in historically underserved areas of the County and to businesses impacted by the current civil unrest;
- g. Require businesses to report key metrics, including but not limited to:
 - i. Revenue retained and/or generated as a result of participation in the program; and
 - ii. Number of workers retained and/or re-hired as a result of inclusion in this program;
- h. Require businesses to partner with their local workforce development boards to avail themselves of critical workforce services, including specialized recruitment, pre-screening, and subsidized wages as enterprises start to re-hire; and

- i. Require eligible businesses to become certified through relevant DCBA business preference programs;
2. Direct DCBA and WDACS in consultation with OEM to explore business partnerships with PPE vendors throughout the County to secure PPE for certified pandemic-compliant businesses at or below market value;
3. Direct DCBA and WDACS to develop a comprehensive marketing and outreach campaign to promote the Pandemic-Compliant Business Partnership Program and create awareness of State and County business compliance orders and to provide direction in a culturally competent and linguistically appropriate manner; and
4. Direct the CEO to work with DCBA, LACDA, and WDACS on recommendations to bring together County, state, city, private sector and philanthropic resources to set aside a minimum of \$60 million for administration of the program including, but not limited to, the fabrication of Pandemic-Compliant placards, education, outreach, and technical assistance.

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