

Community Responses to COVID-19 | Pennsylvania Downtown Center

3/24/2020 – 851 confirmed cases

- Around 50 callers on the call
- Julie provided us with a recap of some of the efforts that the Pennsylvania Downtown Center is taking to provide information and updates through emails, the PDC forum, and individual communications. PDC will be offering webinars and remote trainings on specific issues as they pertain to the current crisis resources as well as additional common topics that pertain to most Main Street and Elm Street programs.
- PDC announced that they will be sending out a brief survey for Main Street and Elm Street programs to share their current Transformation Strategies, so that PDC can provide targeted trainings.
- PDC intends to offer targeted webinars to provide online webinar trainings on some of the common themes, issues, and opportunities that exist in the communities. **Program managers will be encouraged to share these webinar opportunities with their boards and committees, they are not just for program managers.** PDC understands the types of schedules that people are keeping at the moment with the additional demands of working from home and will offer some trainings in the evening to accommodate parents' schedules, etc.
- Mandy from DCED encouraged everyone to watch the reports from the governor and DCED's web page. It is being updated constantly. <https://dced.pa.gov/resources/> AND [COVID-19 Working Capital Access Program \(CWCA\)](#)
- Sam Thrush from Chambersburg asked about retailers who are seeking to provide curbside services. Mandy informed us that retailers are not permitted to provide this service. It is not approved under the governor's directions. They should only be fulfilling orders online and shipping them. She wanted to reemphasize that we are all meant to be limiting contact with people at every opportunity.
- Nancy from Ardmore asked about conversation about redirecting CDBG funding. As of now there has been no direction regarding that and if you have questions you should reach out to your county.
- Nancy also asked about their outdoor cleaning staff who do litter and sidewalk cleaning. Janitorial services are considered essential, but we might consider limiting this to prevent unnecessary contact. Public health and safety must take priority at this point.
 - Submit a waiver request on the DCED website.
<https://expressforms.pa.gov/apps/pa/DCED/Waiver-process-keeping-physical-locations-open>
- Dave Aichele from Lancaster Downtown Investment District asked about their reauthorization process for their BID. The State has not made any decisions on that. Bill Fontana informed us that this is state law, and it just requires that you notify the State that you've been reauthorized. This is more a local decision between your organization and the municipal government. City council could vote to extend the termination date for 6 months. Consult with your lawyer because you don't want your reauthorization challenged. Julie Fitzpatrick reminded us that several municipal authorities are in similar situations and that we should look at alternative methods for community engagement.

- Dave Schell from MSMJ – have there been a lot of waivers approved and is there a certain business type that the governor will allow to open? Mandy, “There’s been like 15,000 requests.”
 - Check the revised list of businesses.
- Contractors that are doing emergency repairs are permitted to do that and there is no waiver needed.
- Barbers, salons, groomers are not going to be approved for waivers.
- Stephanie Simon from Hatboro wanted to thank everyone in advance for providing some ideas about what we can do after the pandemic. Things that we can do to get people back into stores and events we can plan for when it is safe to be in public again.
- Lauren in Hershey asks if PDC had considered creating a Facebook group to connect with managers and staff. Maria shared that we could create that by the end of the week. Once that is created, that notification will be going out.
 - Gina Thompson from Downtown Bellefonte Inc. has a Facebook page for their organization and is their primary way to disseminate information to the community and have a private page specifically for their business owners. They use that actively to provide information and assistance to the businesses.
 - Sam Thrush from Chambersburg created a Facebook group that is specifically for businesses and stakeholders. They have been actively using the group and it has been well received.
 - Nancy from Ardmore also has a private group for business owners in the district, but a lot of the owners haven’t been trained to use Facebook for information yet. They have found it challenging that some people in the group aren’t owners, so it takes some maintenance.
- Kim Kmetz from Easton asked about immediate cashflow for businesses. She encouraged business owners to reach out to their property owners, but many aren’t receiving help with rent. She wanted to know if the state would be doing anything to support these businesses so that they are not evicted. She also indicated that locally they are doing what they can to raise funds.
 - Right now, there is nothing but the SBA and the SBF funding.
- Kelly from Ephrata indicated that she was talking to some of their banks and they did not have any answers yet. She wanted to know what sort of information that business owners should be gathering so that when assistance become available, they will be ready to apply.
 - Check with the SBA website and look at their typical applications. That should give you all the information you’ll need for just about any type of program that will come out.
- Larry Newman from Wilkes-Barre indicated that SBDC has a good list of information that businesses should start compiling.
 - SBDC has some webinars coming up.
<https://pasbdc.ecenterdirect.com/events?reset=1&path=>
 - Webinar presentations are available on PDC’s resources page -
<https://padowntown.org/coronavirus-covid-19-resources>
- Naomi from Quakertown wanted to reaffirm that we should be listening in on webinars and passing on information to our legislators so that we are all informed and putting out information so that businesses are ready to get these funds. She also wanted to thank DCED for their work.

- Terry from Monongahela informed us that they have around 20 organizations that put on downtown related events. Is there a standard format for recovery?
 - The teachers in their district did a caravan where they waived at the school kids.
- Regarding school closings and business closings we should be keeping up with the governor's announcements. The information changes hourly. Remember that the goal is to flatten the curve.
- DCED staff is teleworking and they are accessible. - -
- PDC will continue to make available opportunities for program managers to connect