

**North Carolina State Disaster Recovery Task Force**  
**Business and Workforce RSF**  
August 20, 2019 – 10:00am-12:00pm  
North Carolina Emergency Operations Center – Media Room

**Meeting Minutes**

**Lead Agency: NC Department of Commerce**

Liz Crabill, Chief Deputy Secretary

Susan Fleetwood, Executive Director of Economic Development

**Staff: NC Office of Recovery and Resilience (NCORR)**

Amanda Martin, Deputy Chief Resilience Officer

### Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of Agenda

A brief overview of the meeting was provided.

### RSF Mission and Scope

Amanda Martin gave background and overview of SDRTF and Framework. Three roles of RSFs:

- Identify and address unmet needs in current recoveries
- Develop relationships and a framework to work together in future disaster recoveries,
- Advise on long-term resilience in the state

RSF can determine its own priorities and preferred ways of working. The RSFs have the opportunity to work independently, collaborate with other RSFs, as well as provide formal recommendations to NCORR and NCEM, who administer some recovery programs and work closely with other agencies and the administration on others.

### Current RSF Areas of Focus

This RSF has been colloquially referred to as the Business Recovery Collaborative. Originally included Commerce and their contractor, Economic Development Partnership of NC (EDPNC). EDPNC has business function called Business Link NC (BLNC) that essentially serves as a call center. EDPNC w/ BLNC allows NC Dept. of Commerce to accept large volumes of business inquiries and subsequently direct them to different support services. Our overall goal is to utilize the group's expertise to help counsel local businesses impacted by disaster and improve their opportunities to receive SBA loans, or find other alternatives for them. Ideally, impacted businesses would register with FEMA and then call into BLNC to be routed through one of the counselors, which have been provided through both SBTDC and the Small Business Center Network of the Community Colleges.

The areas or issues that have previously been raised as priorities for this group to work on are as follows:

### *Joint Updates to Framework*

Business and Workforce updates have been provided for the 2019 update of the State Disaster Recovery Framework.

### *Role of Survey of Impacted Businesses*

Legislature required Dept. of Commerce to survey businesses impacted by Hurricane Matthew, and they received decent information from this. Could be something that we do again in the future.

Comment: EM is satisfied with current resources to assess the scope of impact immediately following disasters and respond effectively, but aspects of the survey could be useful as EM starts developing their action plan for CDBG-DR funds. E.g. Survey could provide insight into resources businesses used following the disaster; success of predatory lending programs is worth exploring

### *Centralized Website for Business Recovery Services (nc.gov?)*

Currently there is a Collaborative website (extension of SBTDC's website) that directs companies through the aforementioned steps. Very informational, but this RSF might consider opening a dialogue to continue improving its overall effectiveness

### *Identification of Business Recovery Programs*

Department of Commerce provided recommendations for potential business recovery programs in a March 1 report. Some of the proposals discussed in that report include a recovery program for existing buildings, tourism marketing, additional support for business counseling, and support for Commerce's Rural Planning Office to offer technical assistance for supporting local governments. Commerce can share that report with the RSF.

Idea: Is it possible to establish a certification process for businesses who have gone through the SBA process to show that they have everything completed/incentivize businesses to complete every step of the program and have appropriate documentation ready?

### *Identification of Pre-Selected Business Recovery Centers*

Possibility of pre-identifying prospective sites to be Business Recovery Centers.

### *Coordination with Emergency Management*

Challenges with coordination and communication with EM to be reconciled by the existence of this RSF

### *Developing Protocols with FEMA and SBA re: NC's Business Recovery Collaborative*

Ideally, would like to be working with SBA to unroll our programs in coordination, in the same location, etc., after disaster.

### *Instruction Manual for Business Recovery Collaborative*

This effort was begun last year. This manual will document how this collaborative will function when faced with real-world situations

## Other Potential Areas of Focus

- Local government and/or workforce development projects
  - Shortage of workers in construction fields that NC disaster recovery task force could tackle to engage that workforce
- Public facing list of contractors that have been vetted?
  - To defend against price-gauging contractors

- There is a publicly-accessible list online. Difficult to navigate, but does provide useful information about contractors/type of work they offer

### Prioritization and Recommendations Related to Areas of Focus

The group discussed the following items as potential priorities. The locations for business recovery centers and the workforce development issues emerged as topics for next meeting, along with a discussion of unmet needs.

- Identification of locations for business recovery centers (low hanging fruit)
- Development of communication and resource list. Communications for small businesses and communications for local governments. Feedback for previous lists has been overwhelmingly positive in helping people determine who they need to engage with for help/information
- Question: What needs are still left? May be worthwhile to have this discussion at next meeting
  - People lack understanding of what assets are available following a disaster
  - Delay in businesses coming in to apply for assistance because of immediate personal emergencies that needed to be addressed beforehand
- Come up with timeline of potential services task force can offer
- Certified disaster recovery business idea
  - Issue encountered: People aren't appropriately focused on their recovery and long-term resilience and when they encounter roadblocks in the recovery process they are easily discouraged and stop
  - Task force to improve ongoing communication with local governments/small businesses regarding recovery programs and encouraging investments
- Consolidate and distribute disaster-preparedness information kit for small businesses. Collaborative effort to build resource book w/ parallel for local governments
- Workforce issues a high priority for this group

### Wrap Up and Next Steps

How regularly will this task force convene? Approaching hurricane season, might be useful meet at least every 2 or 3 weeks and switch to an "as-needed" basis following the end of hurricane season

Work on pre-identifying locations for Business Recovery Centers will occur in the next few weeks until the next meeting.

Should the next meeting include additional individuals that specialize in areas that need improvement? Yes- bring in experts with experience in workforce issues and possibly unemployment insurance.

Might be useful to establish sub-groups outside of whole group meetings

**Next meeting 10:00 am Wednesday, September 18. Location TBC.**