Reopening Chicagoland Business
Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce

The COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force comprised of a group of 25 local business and civic leaders convened to discuss the logistics and practical challenges of reopening Chicago’s economy. This group collectively identified the policies and conditions necessary, including a series of “must haves” and action items, to expedite our economic recovery, while simultaneously prioritizing safety, trust, and equity.

1 | Rebuild trust among employees: Business leaders should clearly communicate what steps they have taken to protect the health and safety of their employees with honesty, transparency, and a two-way dialogue.

2 | Provide flexibility: As more businesses reopen, business leaders and managers should make good-faith efforts to offer greater flexibility for workers during a very uncertain time.

3 | Safeguard public spaces and invest in critical infrastructure: Community assets like public transportation, schools, and childcare centers are key enablers to fully reopening our economy and should be safeguarded.

4 | Provide clear guidelines and consistent communication: Businesses need clear direction about reopening procedures, protocols for handling positive tests, and information about where to go for help.

5 | Support small and disadvantaged businesses: Supporting minority- and women-owned businesses, and disadvantaged business enterprises (M/W/DBEs), especially within the small business community, is critical to the region’s economic recovery.

*MUST HAVES*

- Clear Guidance for Testing & Accessing PPE
- Schools & Childcare Centers
- Transportation
- Liability Protection
- Talent & Workforce
- Small Business Support
- Regulatory Relief
- Mental Health & Wellness
- Investing in Our Infrastructure
**ACTION ITEMS**

- Press city and state leaders to provide concise and digestible information so business owners know where to send employees for testing and what to do in the case of a positive result.
- Work with other business groups and the region’s transit agencies to survey the business community’s ridership demand and support related planning efforts.
- Facilitate business community support to help schools acquire laptops, tablets, and other remote-learning devices for all students, particularly vulnerable or at-risk students who need to self-isolate.
- Work with our members, the business community, and policymakers to address gaps in existing state and local statutes.
- Refocus the Chamber’s existing job training programs to provide employers with new, in-depth training on new safety policies and protocols.
- Launch new small business support programs to increase SBDC advising, training, professional business coaching, and education with a specific emphasis on minority, women, veteran, and disability-owned businesses (among other certified business types).
- Push back against costly mandates like universal testing.
- Promote wellness and mental health programs to our members and the business community.
- Push for the full $8.5 billion investment in O’Hare Airport modernization.

**CHICAGO PLEDGE**

Recognizing the profound impact that COVID-19 has had on Chicagoland’s economy, as well as the pandemic’s disproportionate impact on communities of color, we take the Chicago Pledge and encourage the business community to:

**BUY LOCALLY**
Buy from Chicago-area companies, particularly minority, women, and disadvantaged business enterprises (MWDBEs) and small businesses, which make up the backbone of our regional supply chain.

**INVEST LOCALLY**
Invest in disadvantaged communities by partnering with community organizations to deliver volunteers and other resources.

**HIRE LOCALLY**
Hire and recruit locally and forge new partnerships to diversify talent pipelines.

**LISTEN & LEARN**
Facilitate and promote conversations within our companies and our communities about structural inequalities related to economic opportunity, health care, education, and transportation.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE THE CHICAGO PLEDGE]