

# Unified Command

## Economic Impacts Branch:

**Mission:** The mission of the Economic Impacts Branch is to support and connect the Douglas County business community, arts and cultural institutions and major employers to resources and financial support opportunities, serve as a conduit for sharing information, work to strengthen and improve resiliency of the economy during COVID 19, and set the future foundation and create opportunities so that our community can arrive at a stronger and more equitable economy after COVID 19.

Goal 1 – Support and connect Douglas County business community to resources and financial support opportunities

Strategy:	Action Steps:
1. Create and maintain a business/cultural arts community information portal on the Chamber website to share information	Broaden information and proactive dissemination of info
2. Convene bi-weekly Economic Impact meetings for resource and information sharing	Ongoing
3. Monitor COVID 19 grant and resource opportunities	Ongoing
4. Inform business community of COVID 19 grant and resource opportunities	Ongoing web presence/site is next step
5. Provide technical resources or direct businesses to technical resources to pursue financial support opportunities	Need to promote available resources and connect to businesses—send email updates providing brief insightful information on resources-SBDC, KS Commerce, Network Kansas, etc. This information should also be on whatever we presence we establish

Goal 2: Serve as a conduit for sharing information

Strategy:	Action Steps:
1. Create and maintain a business/cultural arts community information portal on the Chamber website to share information	Broaden information and proactive dissemination of info

<p><b>2. Convene bi-weekly Economic Impact meetings for resource and information sharing</b></p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>3. Provide opportunities for broader perspectives regarding the economy and recovery to be shared</b></p>	<p>Develop speaker's bureau with monthly presentations on economic and related topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations at our regular meetings</li> <li>• Presentations available on website/digital platform</li> <li>• Transmission of information through different platforms and channels</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Providing learning opportunities regarding equity related to the economy</b></p>	<p>Speakers bureau would include different voices speaking on economic equity and diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations at our regular meetings</li> <li>• Presentations available on website/digital platform</li> <li>• Information pushed out using broad set of platforms and channels</li> </ul>

Goal 3: Work to strengthen and improve resiliency of the economy during COVID 19

<p><b>Strategy:</b></p>	<p><b>Action Steps:</b></p>
<p><b>1. Develop and monitor core set of economic metrics in coordination with other community efforts and planning work</b></p>	<p>Economic metrics/dashboard key measures- Unemployment/employment data with gender, age, education, and racial breakdowns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -Housing affordability index- combining housing costs and Lawrence specific income</li> <li>• -Commercial property/residential property ratio</li> <li>• -Local job numbers identifying proportion of jobs paying above average wage with breakdowns by gender, age, education and race</li> <li>• -Housing availability across multiple types and price ranges</li> <li>• -Knowledge economy jobs as a proportion of our job mix-Growth metrics—County domestic product, etc.</li> <li>• Other key measurements or links to industry-specific measurements as needed</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of Douglas County economy</b></p>	<p>Use expertise of KU IPSR, MARC, Ernst &amp; Young and others to identify challenges and solutions</p>

<p><b>3. Identify and propose solutions for temporary business/cultural arts community needs/challenges which may arise as a result of COVID 19</b></p>	<p>Be a champion/advocate in support of local industry and companies working with City, County, State and Federal entities to assist our businesses in overcoming challenges—whatever they may be.</p>
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Goal 4: Set the future foundation and create opportunities so that our community can arrive at a stronger and more equitable economy after COVID 19

Strategy:	Action Steps:
<p><b>1. Develop a City of Lawrence Strategic Economic Development Plan</b></p>	<p>Development of Lawrence strategic economic development plan is currently underway</p>
<p><b>2. Participate in and coordinate with the Anti-Poverty Coalition work of the Community Health Plan</b></p>	<p>Coordinate with the Anti-Poverty coalition to advance work of Community Health Plan</p>
<p><b>3. Be intentional about addressing equity disparities</b></p>	<p>Develop initiatives/programs to proactively address racial disparities and systemic poverty and factors influencing poverty, such as; affordable childcare, access to transportation, housing access, access to medical care/insurance, broadband access, etc.</p>
<p><b>4. Proactively address strengths and weaknesses of Douglas County economy</b></p>	<p>City of Lawrence strategic economic development plan needs to be expanded ultimately to encompass the entire county.</p>

**Topics which were identified at the October 13, 2020 meeting:**

1. **Youth sports tournaments:** Michael Davidson expressed a concern about the limitations on youth sports tournaments and the hotel/hospitality industry in Lawrence.
  - Status: Lawrence Parks and Recreation is working with Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health on guidance. The issue was reported at the Unified Command meeting October 15.
2. **Homelessness in the Downtown:** Brady Flannery expressed concern about the increased number of homeless in the downtown area and its impact on businesses and business patrons.
  - Status: The Housing and Human Services Branch is working on homelessness issues. The issue was reported at the Unified Command meeting October 15.
3. **Transient Guest Tax Usage:** Michael Davidson expressed concern with how transient guest tax was being utilized and asked if it was being utilized in the best manner.
  - Status: The City Commission had a work session earlier in October to discuss transient guest tax. The issue was noted at the Unified Command meeting October 15.
4. **Closing Time for Restaurants and Bars:** Sally Zogry brought up the issue of the closing time on restaurants and bars and its economic impact.

- Status: The [current health order](#) dated October 1, 2020 requires closing time for restaurants and bars which serve alcohol at midnight with last call for alcohol service at 11 pm. The health order is issued by the Health Officer with Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health. Through the pandemic, the health order has been updated from time to time based on responses to case numbers, knowledge about virus transmission and how cases are spreading. The issue was reported at the Unified Command meeting October 15.