



## INDIANA CHAMBER RECOVERY AGENDA AND RESOURCES

Our advocacy team is formalizing a full public policy agenda of potential actions to help ensure short-term relief and long-term economic growth for businesses. A sampling of those initiatives:

- Provide legal protections for employers who follow established safety guidelines for COVID-19. If an employee contracts the virus after work resumes, the reality is the person could have been exposed to it at home or out in the general public, but it's the employer that likely will be seen as a target for lawsuit.
- Prioritize state budget resources to promote economic recovery.
- Adopt statewide work share program. This will allow employees to receive partial unemployment insurance benefits when their hours are reduced. From the employer side, they receive a valuable alternative to dealing with economic downturns and the ability to retain workers with institutional business knowledge.
- Provide tax credit for capital expenditures that enable remote work. There are significant costs incurred to get virtual offices set up with high-speed internet and office equipment (laptops, printers, etc.).
- Enact meaningful property tax relief for the most impacted industries.
- Exempt Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan amounts from state income tax.

# INDIANA'S ROAD TO RECOVERY

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce endorses a gradual re-opening of the state's economy as soon as is feasible in May, recognizing the ongoing importance of health and safety. We must get back to a level of business activity that resembles some sense of normalcy.

For that economic restart to occur, a series of considerations need to be addressed. We submitted the following recommendations (and more) to the Governor and his economic recovery team to get the business community on the road to recovery:

### STATEWIDE RETURN-TO-WORK SAFETY GUIDELINES (FOR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS)

Uniform guidelines established by appropriate state/federal officials, which will provide certainty of procedures and instill confidence in the workforce. Specific areas of focus:

- **Masks and social distancing**
- **Disinfecting strategies**
- **Engineering approaches** (air filters, increased ventilation options, installing physical barriers like sneeze guards, etc.)
- **Mental health care**
- **Testing options**
- **Protective behaviors best practices** (e.g., cough etiquette and proper use of personal protective equipment [PPE] when needed)
- **Protocol if someone is symptomatic/tests positive** (from sending symptomatic employees home to instituting return-to-work clearances)



## LEGAL PROTECTION ORDER THROUGH IOSHA OR OTHER STATE AGENCY

Companies need assurance that as long as they are abiding by the state return-to-work safety guidelines (as noted above) and any additional IOSHA guidelines based on their industry that they are immune from lawsuits if an employee contracts COVID-19 after returning to work. The reality is the person could have been exposed to the virus at home or out in the general public, but it's the employer who likely will be seen as a target for lawsuit. At minimum, a thorough state-led examination of liability issues is urgently needed.

## SET COVID-19 TESTING STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Increased testing will not only speed the return-to-work process but also provide greater peace of mind to all Hoosiers.



## FORMALIZE STATE SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

A variety of initiatives – additional state or private sector investments; accelerated government payments to business vendors; potential tax credits and exemptions; and more – were proposed for consideration in the effort to assist small businesses.

## CONTINUED PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR TELECOMMUTING + ENSURE RELIABLE, HIGH SPEED BROADBAND

For many professional services and other industries where it makes sense, telecommuting seems the best course of action in the short-term for a portion or all employees. Hand in hand with that is infrastructure to allow that to take place. Indiana is blessed to have quality broadband service reliability through various providers in the state. Where any rural area service may be lacking, state/federal assistance to strengthen internet capabilities should be deployed.

## HR/ADMINISTRATIVE FAQ OR WEBINAR SERIES FOR GENERAL CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS

There are always administrative controls or changes to work policies needed to reduce or minimize exposure to a hazard. With respect to COVID-19, that may come in the form of re-defined shift schedules and safety education/training plans for workers, for example. An HR/administrative FAQ or webinar series to jumpstart the process would be especially beneficial for small employers.

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**Indiana Chamber of Commerce** | [www.indianachamber.com](http://www.indianachamber.com)

Brock Hesler, Vice President, Membership and Foundation Relations  
(317) 919-6458 | [bhesler@indianachamber.com](mailto:bhesler@indianachamber.com)

- Provide quick refund request option for businesses that have overpaid estimated state taxes.
- Invest significant federal assistance funds in further expanding high-speed broadband access. Working remotely is all the more important during this pandemic and broadband is the key to effective telecommuting.
- Expand telehealth and telemedicine. A push for more providers to get the state's Telemedicine Provider Certification is likely in order, especially for the workforce in more rural areas.

The complete economic recovery agenda will be distributed to the Governor, legislative leaders and our full membership.

## WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO OFFER YOUR COMPANY:

**FREE webinars** led by legal, HR and other professionals on a wide range of topics designed to help your business emerge from this crisis. More than 5,000 participants to date, with many more taking advantage of on-demand replays.



**Employer resource center** – The Road to Recovery sequel to our employer coronavirus resource page will offer education and tools to help you restart your business. A current “submit question” feature enables you to get answers for your specific questions. Nearly 25,000 have taken advantage of the available resources.

**Outreach communications** to check in to see how things are going and where we might be able to assist you further.