



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## PRESS RELEASE

### LOCAL LEADERS FORM ECONOMIC RESILIENCY TASK FORCE TO MAP CORONAVIRUS STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS COMMUNITY

**Task force will focus on assessment, response, mitigation, and recovery**

**Syracuse, N.Y.** – The City of Syracuse, Onondaga County, CenterState CEO, and the Manufacturers Association of CNY (MACNY) are deploying a joint task force of public and private-sector leaders to help guide the Syracuse and Onondaga County business and non-profit community through the COVID-19 pandemic. The eight-member Economic Resiliency Task Force will convene its first meeting this week to devise strategies to help businesses continue operations and plan for the recovery of the local economy.

The volunteer task force will undertake a four-stage response to the economic challenges presented by the pandemic: assess, respond, mitigate, and recover. It will draw on the resources and expertise of a “working team” made up of staff from the City’s Department of Neighborhood and Business Development; the County’s Office of Economic Development; CenterState CEO; MACNY; the Downtown Committee; Visit Syracuse; New York State Empire State Development, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and the Central New York International Business Alliance.

“The pace at which many of our businesses and their employees experienced a downturn is staggering. The impact has been crippling to too many already,” said Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh. “We need to respond equally fast with support to help them continue operations in the face of great change. We also need to make a plan now for how Syracuse and Onondaga County is prepared to exit the pandemic and kick our economy back into high gear.”

“Our community already knew what the meaning of ‘all in this together’ is about, and that has helped us respond more effectively to the health threat of the coronavirus,” said Onondaga County Executive J. Ryan McMahan, II. “We will direct that same energy and commitment into supporting our business community. Our economy has been on the upswing, and with the right action and planning now, we can continue that trajectory as COVID-19 recedes.”

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“Many of our manufacturers have been hit hard by this pandemic, but they are dedicated and resilient, and working hard to keep their essential business operations running,” said Randy Wolken, president and CEO of MACNY. “We know they will need our support when this crisis is over. The Economic Resiliency Task Force is a great example of meaningful and effective collaboration that can help our economy rebound after the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“CenterState CEO is committed to seeing all our region's residents emerge from this crisis stronger and more prosperous,” said Robert Simpson, president of CenterState CEO. “While CNY is no stranger to economic hardship, we have learned how to tackle any challenge with collaboration, innovation and data-driven decision-making. We've done it before and now, through the efforts of the Economic Resiliency Task Force, we will do it again.”

The members of the Task Force are: Nate Andrews, president, Morse Manufacturing; Calvin Corriders, regional president, Pathfinder; Jeff Davis, partner, Barclay Damon; Jo Anne C. Gagliano, president of Environmental Design & Research and chair of Syracuse Regional Airport Authority; David Hoyne, owner, Kitty Hoynes; Evelyn Ingram, director of community relations, Wegmans; Jeff Knauss, chief executive officer, Digital Hyve; and Loretta Zolkowski, executive director, Human Services Leadership Council.

Work on the Task Force’s four-phase approach is already underway:

#### **Assess**

CenterState CEO is conducting a baseline survey of local businesses to gather concerns, impacts, actions, and best practices on business operations and personnel dynamics. The survey results, combined with information from direct contact with CenterState CEO and MACNY members, will be used to inform policy decisions, develop advocacy priorities, create new programming, catalogue best practices, and identify common pain points in the region. Those organizations willing to provide feedback and participate in the survey can do so at <https://bit.ly/ceocovidsurvey>.

#### **Respond**

The Task Force will aggregate information from government, private, and non-profit sector partners and provide guidance to the business community as needed, with daily recaps, explanations of crucial business information, and common resource sites. Anyone seeking to contact the Task Force can do so by emailing [support@centerstateceo.com](mailto:support@centerstateceo.com).

#### **Mitigate**

The Task Force will review emerging, individual business needs and provide applicable connections to resources, employment prospects, supply chain opportunities, and financial assistance, as well as respond to other short term, time sensitive requests. The goal is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the community’s response and mitigate duplication of efforts and staff resources.

#### **Recover**

The Task Force will provide a structure for long term recovery planning efforts, ongoing program assessment, and qualitative feedback for local partners’ mitigation and recovery efforts in coordination with partner organizations and business community leadership.

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Stakeholder feedback will play a key role in steps that are taken as a result of the Task Force. Tools such as the business survey will equip members with the understanding of the how local employers and organizations are being affected by COVID-19. In order to properly act upon the four-phase approach, the Task Force will closely monitor the pandemic as the situation develops and reassess challenges and opportunities. The group's goal is to collectively work toward the mission of serving those facing current economic hardship and forging a path forward in an unprecedented time.

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