

Briefing Document COVID-19 Regional Economic Response Action Team

The Central Okanagan economy, like economies worldwide, is impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Provided below is an update on the RDCO Economic Development Commission's (COEDC) response to date, planned short term actions and long-term recovery initiatives.

The COEDC is serving the region by establishing and implementing response and recovery plans:

- Communicating the direction and protocols from Interior Health and the provincial and federal levels of government.
- Coordinating with partners to develop a two-phased regional approach:
 - A.) Short-term Response team to help local businesses “weather the storm”
 - B.) Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery strategy to “emerge stronger”

The short-term response phase (1-3 months), the focus is on ensuring public health and supporting businesses and the labour force through the immediate impacts of business shutdowns and/or severely reduced revenue. The long-term recovery phase (4-18 months) will focus on emerging from this crisis stronger and encouraging new opportunities for economic prosperity.

Economic Response Team – “Weathering the Storm”

Objective:

Provide support and services to help Central Okanagan businesses navigate through the immediate economic impact of COVID-19.

Led by the COEDC

Partners:

- District of Lake Country, City of Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, City of West Kelowna, District of Peachland
- Representatives from Chambers of Commerce/Boards of Trade – Lake Country, Kelowna, Greater Westside, Peachland
- Tourism Kelowna
- Central Okanagan Business Service Providers
- COEDC to act as a conduit for the [COEDC Advisory Council](#)

Roles and information-sharing mechanisms:

- COEDC to chair weekly meetings (virtual or in-person as appropriate)
- COEDC to chair bi-weekly information-sharing meetings with the Economic Response Team

- Team members to complete agreed upon reporting template to share what they are hearing from respective client base/communities and update on activities in advance of biweekly meetings or as required.
- COEDC to collate feedback and activity reports into a collective report (one voice) to be provided to elected officials, senior levels of government and partners monthly or as needed.

FAQ's

What is the Region doing?

- **Act as concierge service, providing one on one expertise to businesses**
- **Collect and share local data from existing survey mechanisms**
In an attempt to avoid “death by survey” and increasing the burden on businesses, the Region is working with BCEDA, Small Business BC and the BC Chamber to access Central Okanagan specific data from regular province-wide surveys. If that survey does not meet medium to long term needs, partners may consider issuing a coordinated regional online survey (Business Walks approach).
- **Facilitate industry sector roundtables – Aerospace, Manufacturing, Agriculture and other sectors**
Working through the COEDC’s established 45 member industry-rich Advisory Council to maintain an inflow-outflow of information to a cross section of major industry leaders, business service providers, academia and elected officials. COEDC staff are connecting individually with industry representatives, meeting with the industry-led executive and Advisory Council meetings virtually or in-person.
- **Communicate business needs to Provincial/Federal government with One Voice**
The COEDC facilitates weekly staff calls with a core group including of municipal and WFN economic development officers, all chambers of commerce/boards of trade, business service providers and Tourism Kelowna.
- **Promote “Support Local” initiatives**
- **Share all available business support and funding programs in centralized location**
Relevant resources are housed at InvestKelowna.com/covid19 and updated daily.