



KEY WEST RECOVERS!

October 2020



A 17-Point Business and Humanitarian Covid Recovery Plan for 2020 -2021

A Joint Community/Government Initiative



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17-POINT ACTION PLAN FOR 2020-21

Purpose and Process for the Plan

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

- Margaret Wheatley

Covid has reached almost every community on the planet, and found its way even to the “end of the road.” It has hurt our island’s businesses and brought existing challenges to new heights. We’ve seen crises over the years, but never one like this.

They say it’s not what happens in life that matters, but how we deal with it. In Key West we are famous for our kick back, laid back, “it’s happy hour somewhere” attitude, but when a crisis hits – hurricanes, recessions, and now a pandemic, we stand up.

In September 2020, the Key West City Government began developing a Covid Recovery Plan for Key West. Many other municipalities around the U.S. have done something similar with positive results. The goal was to create a plan for 6 to 18 months that could move our community faster towards a state of stasis while maintaining the most critical need of all – our safety.

Key West Recovers has been built from the ground up in a matter of six weeks. It comes from community members, and is an excellent example of government/civil society participation. In total, the process involved more than 300 people, who volunteers approximately more than 200 hours of time. The process took place in four major steps.

Step 1 - Round Tables: 20 Round Table Zoom meetings with more than 250 community members from businesses, non profits, and informal groups on housing, education, and poverty.

Step 2 – Surveys: A survey was delivered to all Round Table participants after each meeting to get quantifiable data on priority needs and preferences the plan.

Step 3 – Task Force: An inter-disciplinary group of 11 community members were selected to turn the narrative from the round tables and the data from the surveys into action items.

Step 4 – Plan Developed: and Shared Again with the Community: The plan was developed by the Task Force in conjunction with the Mayor, City Manager, Assistant City Manager Finance Director. It has 17 specific, do-able action items, many of which have been set into motion. The plan was sent back to the Round Table participants for any final input or changes before bringing to the City Commission. The Inter-Ministerial Alliance Committee on Equality and Justice provided input on Key West Recovers to ensure that it is inclusive of all members of our community.

The plan is not a “magic bullet”, but it will move the needle towards recovery. Additionally, the process brought to light some of the social struggles that existed, but were not fully realized. In that vein, this plan helps us now, and may very well change the future course of our community for the better.

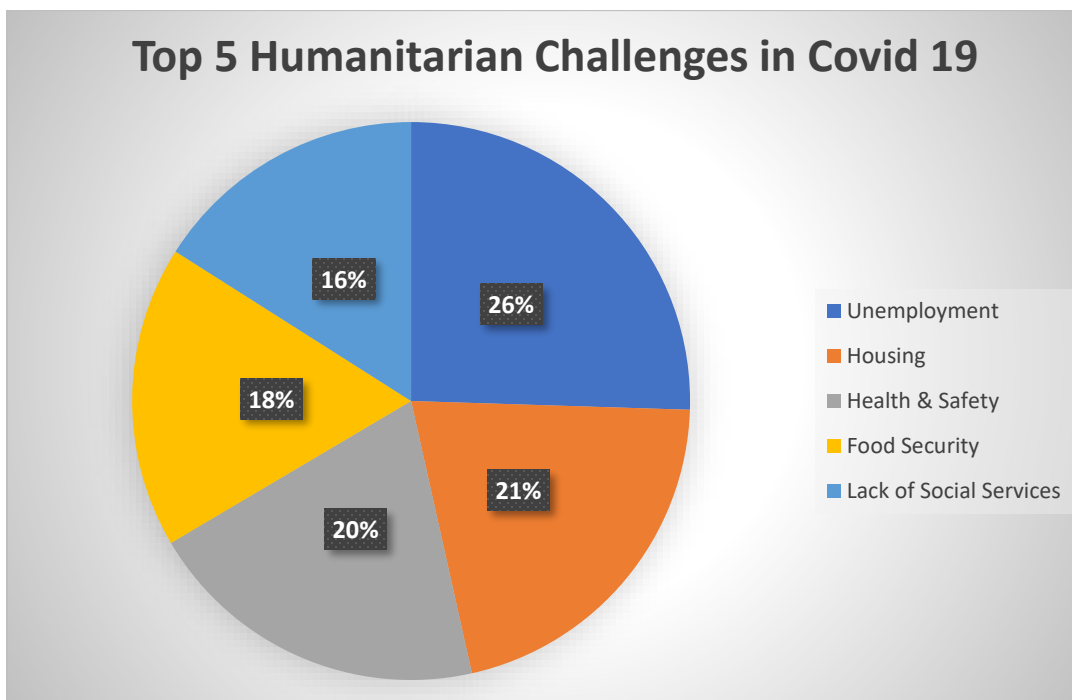
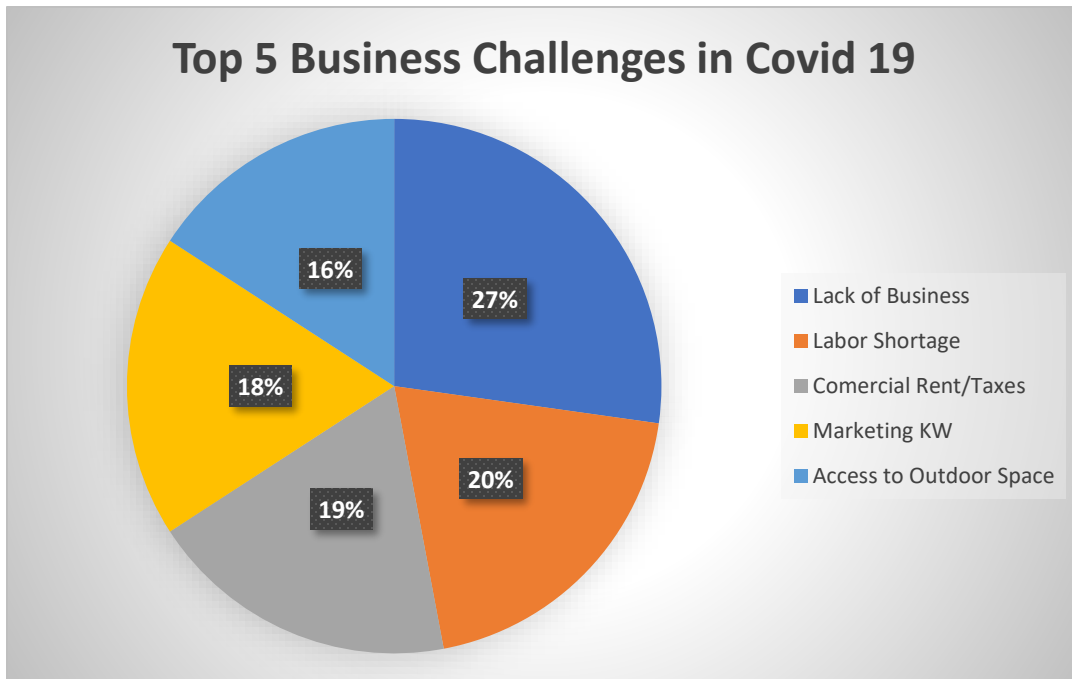
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Data on Key West in Covid 19

Round Table Surveys

The following data is derived from a survey to more than 250 Key West Community members who participated in the Round Table discussions on Covid Recovery from September – October, 2020.



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Relevant Data from Local Institutions

KW Businesses/Economy

- **Employment:** Unemployment in KW is still higher than pre-Covid average, but is improving (Pre-Covid approx 2%; April 22%; August 8%)
- **Workforce:** After Irma approximately 1,500 workers left KW. The Chamber estimates 3,000 have left or will leave due to Covid.
- **Wages:** In the second quarter of 2020, 36% of businesses reported that pay for employed workers decreased.
- **Revenue:** We saw an uptick in June, July and Aug in sales tax: Between 85% and 92% of 2019 numbers.
- **Hardest Hit Industries:** The 5 industries most impacted in KW are: 1) Bars, 2) The lodging sector, 3) restaurants, 4) attractions and 5) retail.
- **Bed Tax Collection:** Key West has lost Bed Tax market share to the County: From 55% to 36%.

Sources: MC Tax Collectors Office, KW Chamber of Commerce Report Q2 2020, City of KW Sales Tax Reports, and Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Humanitarian

Housing/Rental Assistance: 30% of non-profit funding for homelessness prevention for the year, (rent and utilities), has been spent in two months. Local NGOs that provide rental assistance (AH, FKOC) will exhaust funds by early 2021 if the current need continues. We have no plans to handle the end of the moratorium.

Children: 52% of students receive reduced and free lunch. Teachers worry that many students don't have enough to eat on the weekends and school holidays. 33% of homeless students in County are from KW.

Food Security: Demand from our three major food organizations, (MCC, SOS and FKOC), has doubled since March, 2020. Organizations will run out funding at the current rate early in 2021. They are spending upwards of \$75,000 per month to meet demand.

Overall Poverty: The ALICE report shows that 37% of households are at the poverty level or just above. (Pre-Covid)

Sources: Continuum of Care, MCSD, SOS Foundation, United Way/ALICE Report 2019

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The Plan

BUSINESS

1. MARKET KW

Bring back visitors to KW (safely) by increasing communication between the business community and the TDC through two efforts: 1) Providing regular updates on marketing; 2) sharing ads, videos, and signs for businesses to post on social media.

Status Update: TDC gave two community presentations, one to the City Commission, and another to the business community sponsored the Lodging Association. The Mayor will be meeting with the TDC Director to discuss how the City and TDC can strengthen communication and ties.

2. WELCOME & KEEP SAFE SIGNAGE

Put signage in key points on the island that expresses two sentiments: “You are very welcome here” and “Please help us all stay safe.” The message on the signs reads: “Glad you’re here! Play safe, mask up and enjoy Paradise!”

Status Update: Got the okay for Digital signs. The Assistant City Manager is looking into big ground signs at the Southernmost, Mallory Square, Airport and Island Entrance.

3. OPERATION STOREFRONT

An initiative supported by the Florida Keys Council of the Arts to fill empty storefronts on Duval St. The Arts Council will move their annual membership show into shops to entice locals to visit Old Town, and to make the street look beautiful.

Status Update: Most landlords approved. Waiting for a list of empty shops from Will Langley.

4. SAFE EVENTS, FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

Promote outdoor events, fairs and festivals by making it easy for businesses to submit applications. The City will assist as much as possible, and help with planning.

Status Update: City Events staff created a Safety Protocol and Application that is now available on the City Website. They will when they are able with visit sites prior to events.

Request to the Commission: Make it clear in Commission meetings and when talking to community members that the City supports these activities according to our protocol, and will assist as much as we can.

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5. PROMOTING OUTDOOR BUSINESS

Assist restaurants and cafes with efforts to move outside by creating a Safety Protocol and application and by assisting them upon request.

Status Update: City Events staff have created a Safety Protocol and Application. They need the “go ahead” to publicize to businesses.

Request to the Commission: Make it clear in Commission meetings and when talking to community members that the City supports these activities according to our protocol.

6. SUNSET FESTIVAL

Support the Sunset Festival by: 1) Reducing the fees per booth for artisans and performers for 6 months; 2) providing free parking for artisans and performers, and 3) putting signs up attracting visitors to Sunset Festival.

Status Update: Resolution drafted

Request to the Commission: Support the Resolution.

7. DUVAL LOOP

Cut the fees to encourage visitors to get around town to our businesses for free.

Status Update: Resolution drafted

Request to the Commission: Support the Resolution

8. ROLL BACK COMMERCIAL PROPERTY TAXES

Revert millage rate to 2019.

Status Update: Done!

9. FREE BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Florida SBDC at FIU offers one-on-one consulting to business owners in KW. A team 25 experienced business consultants are available, with two in Key West. They also provide training on a number of business topics year round. They can assist with marketing, change management, business strategy, access to capital and more.

Status Update: They are ready to go, with 3 live consultants in KW and more in Miami.

<https://business.fiu.edu/centers/sbdc/index.cfm>

Request to Commission: Make sure your constituents know about this free offering.

10. COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

This is the lynchpin of the Plan. There are currently many resources available for Covid, but no mechanism for sharing them with the community. The City will hire a Communications Coordinator to share resources, services and tools with the Community.

Status Update: Hired for 3 months beginning mid October 2020

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HUMANITARIAN

11. FEED KW

To address a need that has doubled for food in Key West since March 2020, the City will pursue Federal Funding for non-profit organizations in our community who deal directly with food security. The amount being sought is approximately \$75,000 per month.

Status Update: Finance Director is pursuing two avenues for funding: A FEMA PA dedicated to Food Assistance and CARES Act Funds.

Request to Commission: Support the proposal for to the Commission as advised by the Finance Director.

12. KW SCHOOLS BACK PACK PROGRAM

Children in our community go home hungry from school. This is especially a problem on weekends and holiday vacations. The Back Pack Program would provide four schools (Gerald Adams, HOB, Poinciana, and KWHS) with bags on a weekly basis for students to take home over the weekend and on school breaks.

Status Update: Trying to figure out if this can be a part of the allocation for number 11 (Feed KW!) or if we need to find private funding. Many of the families are undocumented, making traditional channels a challenge. Teachers are submitting a cost in mid October to the Task Force.

13. RENTAL ASSISTANCE

The entire \$838,000 dedicated to rental assistance in the Spring of 2020 has been spent. This point illustrates the immense need that exists and will persist for the foreseeable future. The pending end to the moratorium could make matters exponentially worse. This initiative will focus on three things: 1) Conducting an assessment of need and availability of funding for rental assistance; 2) advocating with the County for a current and/or future allocation to support NGOs working on housing; and, 3) developing, if possible, an FMR Reduction Incentive Program for landlords for the next CARES Act allocation.

Status Update: Needs assessment underway. Allocation being pursued for this funding cycle 10/20.

Request to Commission: Support future requests for Reimbursable Funds from the CARES Act

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14. DONATE4 KW

A two-pronged approach to a community fundraiser: 1) Champions who mobilize “pods” of 5 or 6 for big donations and 2) Business donations (in kind or financial). The funds would be used for needs CARES does not cover (which are numerous). May include point 12 KW Back Pack Program and or support for our immigrant community.

Status Update: Haven’t launched it yet. Task Force Members will be working on it.

15. FREE AND FREQUENT COVID TESTING

Provide information to the community about where they can get free testing in the Lower Keys, and pursue (follow) the AHEC proposal for 12 Rapid Testing Machines.

Status Update: Information needs to be compiled and disseminated widely by the Communications Coordinator.

16. CITY LIASION TO KW NGOS

Choose a leader in City Government to participate in NGO consortium meetings, updates, phone calls, and presentations to stay up to date on the needs of community members in housing, food, child care, safety, health and social service.

Status Update: Done. Patti McLaughlin volunteered and has begun joining United Way and COC regular calls.

17. “ONE STOP SHOP” FOR ASSISTANCE

Create a Portal (In English, Spanish and Creole) where community members can come to one place to receive current information and guidance on how to access services (both business and humanitarian). Note: There may be an ability to service this portal with a resource person to assist via United Way.

Status Update: Communications Coordinator will begin with this project.

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Covid Recovery Task Force Members

1. Paul Menta: Small Businesses (Mom & Pops)
2. Nadene Grossman-Orr: Key West Events
3. Jodi Wienhofer: Lodging
4. Pastor Mildred Roscoe: Bahama Village/Faith Based Community
5. Scott Pridgen: Rental Assistance
6. Randy Sterling: Housing
7. Rosi Ware: The Arts Community
8. Nance Frank: The Arts Community
9. Bill Lay: Restaurants
10. Leah Stockton: Non Profits/United Way
11. Patti McLoughlin: Assistant City Manager
12. Elisa Levy: Strategic Planner, Facilitator

List of Round Tables/Group Interviews

Key West Chamber of Commerce (2 sessions)

Key West Business Guild

Key West Lodging Association

Mom & Pops

Florida Keys Restaurant Association (FLRA)

Key West Galleries (Florida Keys Council of the Arts)

Wedding and Event Planners

Key West Attractions Association

Key West Theaters (Florida Keys Council of the Arts)

Community Members in Poverty

Non Profit Organizations

Key West Health and Human Services Organizations

Housing

Key West Teachers

Reimagining Key West Facebook Group

Individual Interviews and Email Correspondence: Teo Masters, Theresa Faber, Marianne Finnizio, Barb Grob, Rick Haskins, Ralph Major, George Bellenger