ARE YOU READY?

By Sandy-Michael McDonald, Director Office of Economic and Small Business Development

The County is finalizing new guidelines for the possible reopening of some businesses on Monday, May 18th. Understandably, some are eager to reopen. As an Economic and Small Business Development Office, we also recognize the importance of getting back to economic vitality and the need to do so in a safe manner. We can advise on the questions of if we should reopen, and when to reopen, but we do not make the final decision. We do recognize that one day all industries will be reopening, and we also hope that is sooner than later. Keeping in mind that the safety of the employees and the customers are the number one priority. However, my question for my business community and especially my small business community is “Are You Ready”?

Your business model post COVID-19, will it work? Getting the State’s and the County’s permission to reopen is very important, but equally important for many industries (maybe not all) but for a great percentage of them, is the question…Are we ready to assure to the best of our ability the safety of our employees, customers, patrons, and clients? This is far more than just a check the box action item on a “To Do” List prior to reopening. Your ability as a business to answer these questions now become part of your marketing strategy for the return of your customers, your potential new customers and possibly your own employees. You not only need to be ready; you now have a responsibility for promoting a message that will possibly lead to your success or failure in this post COVID-19 business reopening.

At no fault of your own, you were asked to close. Some of you, using better judgement chose to close. While others, in some cases, you were ordered to shut down. These circumstances were unfortunately outside of your control. But as we move towards the Phase I reopening and eventually reopening all businesses over time, you must begin your assessment to be ready. Not just ready to provide your quality service, but ready to demonstrate that your quality service awaits your customers, patrons, clients and your employees in a safe environment. It needs to be clear that they will have that reasonable degree of assurance that you are doing your part to keep them safe.

Though we are looking at reopening, we are not insensitive to the fact that some businesses will not recover due to this pandemic and some who will reopen may not be able to sustain. We are still sharing as much information as we can on resources that are available to assist you as you try to sustain your business. We are working with Chambers and Business Development Specialists and others to look at helping some businesses reposition themselves, their service or their product post COVID-19. Please keep in touch with our office through our website about upcoming virtual workshops as well as our daily virtual hours and assistance.

Lastly, as we seek to determine the continued impact of COVID-19 on our local businesses, we need your feedback. Please take a few minutes to complete our 9-question survey on our website, Broward.org/EconDev. Your responses will help us to find other ways to assist you.

For more information, contact the Office of Economic and Small Business Development at 954-357-6400.