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Q4 SURVEY REVEALS CONTINUED IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON LONG BEACH BUSINESSES

(December 18, 2020 – Long Beach, CA) Conducted by the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) in partnership with the City of Long Beach’s Economic Development Department, Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, and Council of Business Associations, the Fourth Quarter (Q4) COVID-19 Economic Impact Survey of Long Beach businesses reveals continued financial strain across industry sectors. Most of the survey’s 203 respondents reported that they have experienced losses in revenue, with 54% responding that they permanently laid off or furloughed employees due to losses incurred since the pandemic began in March.

A follow-up to a prior Q2 2020 survey, this iteration took place from November 10 through December 4. Compared to Q2, a larger proportion of total responses came from Downtown area (55%) and Bixby Knolls (19%), with the remaining spread among the Belmont Shore and Zaferia Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), or outside of BID areas. Most of the respondents identified as small business operators, but there was a greater representation of larger employers (25 or more employees) than in the prior survey. The majority identified as hospitality, accommodation, food services, retail, or “other” business types consisting mostly of specialty personal care services and boutiques.

Notably, one-third of business operators indicated it was very unlikely that they would reopen with full staffing and indoor operations if regulations and business closures last through Q1 of 2021. Asked what resources would be necessary to recover and adapt to the pandemic’s economic impacts, the top requested sources of aid were grant programs, reductions and waivers for local taxes and fees, and advocacy for business protections at the local, state and federal levels.

“The data gathered and analyzed in these surveys will inform future programs and resources for Long Beach businesses,” said John Keisler, Director of the Long Beach Economic Development Department. “This information is an invaluable indicator of the health of our business community, and we intend to leverage it in partnership with business organizations to inform our next steps toward economic transition and recovery.”

Top financial impacts reported by survey respondents included declining sales (a notable 83% of respondents), cancellation of group reservations or planned events, no reduction in rent, and inability to pay bills or fees. Total losses in revenue per business ranged from 0-10% of revenue to 91% or more, with the largest portion of respondents reporting revenue losses of 51-70%.

In addition to more than half of respondents at some point having to lay off employees due to COVID-19 restrictions, about the same percentage of businesses (53%) said they have had difficulty hiring or retaining employees.

Compared to the prior effort, the Q4 survey netted about 300 fewer responses. “We went about this survey in the same way, with all partnering agencies distributing to their contact lists and following up,” noted DLBA Research & Policy Analyst Morris Mills, who analyzed survey data and compiled the report. “I suspect we had fewer respondents this time around because there is an information fatigue among the business community when it comes to the pandemic. We understand how trying the past several months have been for the business community, and we are grateful to those who participated and shared their experiences with us.”

Jeremy Harris, President & CEO of the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, noted that the coming months could be make or break for many businesses. “As the results of the survey show, our business community needs help. Long Beach’s business organizations and the City are working nonstop to create financial relief and provide assistance,” he said.

“DLBA is grateful for the support of our community partners in gathering this data and working together to act upon it,” said Kojian. “The Long Beach City Council recently approved a number of initiatives to aid in our economic recovery, including the extension of the Open Streets Initiative, the development of an informed recovery plan, and two \$5 million resiliency funds to benefit local restaurants and the fitness and personal care sectors pending new federal funds. We hope this news, combined with the arrival of the first vaccines in Long Beach today, show that hope is on the horizon. In the meantime, we will continue our ongoing efforts to assist and uplift our business community.”

To download the Q4 COVID-19 Economic Impact Survey and Executive Summary, [click here](#).

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About the Council of Business Associations: The Long Beach Council of Business Associations is a unified voice for advocacy, acts as an effective communication conduit between business communities, and is a simplified business resource center. For additional information, visit www.cobalb.com

About the Downtown Long Beach Alliance: The Downtown Long Beach Alliance is a non-profit, community-based organization whose mission is to cultivate, preserve and promote a healthy, safe, and prosperous Downtown. By balancing the interests of the residents, as well as businesses, the DLBA creates tangible progress by way of vested interest and solidified partnerships across local, municipal, and commercial lines. For additional information, visit www.downtownlongbeach.org or follow on Facebook @downtownlongbeach and on Twitter and Instagram @DLBA.

About Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce: The Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce serves as the Catalyst for business growth; a Convener of leaders and influences; and a Champion for a stronger community. For additional information, visit www.lbchamber.com or follow on Twitter @thelbchamber and Facebook @lbchamber.

About the Long Beach Economic Development Department: The mission of the City of Long Beach Economic Development Department is to create economic opportunities for workers, investors, and entrepreneurs. This includes making it easier to start and grow a business, streamline the process for property development, and provide businesses with a skilled workforce. The Department includes Property Development, Business Development, and the Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network. For more information, please visit www.longbeach.gov/economicdevelopment/ or follow on Facebook and Twitter @LBEconDev.

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