



Charles County COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Report



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SUMMARY

The Charles County COVID-19 Recovery Task Force was organized in May 2020 bringing together a group of business owners, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and business organizations to explore the impact of the pandemic on local businesses and nonprofits. We were charged with making recommendations to the Charles County Commissioners and the Economic Development Department that would help business owners cope with the constantly changing pandemic conditions. Meeting regularly from June through December 2020, the Task Force gathered information from different business sectors and sought resources available from government and business organizations.

We found that various business sectors were having vastly different experiences. Residential and commercial real estate businesses are working overtime to keep up with a dramatically increased demand. Restaurants, retail, personal services, daycare, and entertainment, however, have been severely impacted by the pandemic and the restrictions on indoor capacity and social distancing. Businesses able to build or expand an online presence have fared reasonably well. Other businesses, such as the barbers and nail salons, do not have the option of online services. Microbusinesses, those with five or fewer employees, often lack the technical expertise or sufficient resources to make the pivot to online business.

Many agencies within Charles County Government have also been heavily impacted by the pandemic. They have had to assume many new responsibilities while continuing the normal operations of government. Task Force members acknowledge that Charles County Government staff members have been very responsive to the needs of local businesses and have worked hard to be flexible in the face of rapidly changing circumstances.

The Task Force has made recommendations for ways to assist the business and nonprofit community for the duration of the pandemic and the recovery period to follow. The recommendations range from specific steps, such as creating a one-page information summary listing available grant funding and other resources, to broader proposals that will require ongoing work, such as supporting and retaining small businesses and assisting businesses with accessing online commerce. The Task Force is happy to report that many of these initiatives are already underway, and Charles County Government staff members have frequently carried ideas from the meetings back to their offices and begun implementation.

Local businesses will need ongoing support and flexibility to survive the remaining months of the pandemic and the recovery period that will follow. Financial support is the most obvious need, but there are numerous other ways the government can assist businesses, from improving messaging to ensuring that regulations are adapted to respond to new circumstances. Ongoing collaboration between government agencies and the local business community is essential.



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It is the policy of Charles County to provide equal employment opportunity to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religious or political affiliation or opinion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or expression, or any other status protected by law.



The Charles County COVID-19 Recovery Task Force was established by resolution of the Charles County Economic Development Advisory Board, dated May 21, 2020, amended on June 3, 2020, and further amended on September 1, 2020. Co-Chairs of the Task Force are Commissioner Thomasina Coates and the Honorable Helen Ina Harrington, Senior Judge. Stephen Scott, Esquire, has served as Vice Chair, and the Task Force has benefited immensely from the guidance of Anne Hooper, Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Board. Members of the Task Force have included representatives from the Economic Development Department (EDD), the Department of Planning and Growth Management (PGM), the Charles County Department of Health (CCDOH), representatives from several other state and local government agencies, the Charles County Chamber of Commerce (CCCC), the Southern Maryland Minority Business Chamber of Commerce (SMMBCOC), the College of Southern Maryland, the Nonprofit Institute, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Maryland Department of Commerce, and business owners from Waldorf, La Plata, Bryans Road, and Indian Head involved in business sectors such as food service, medical practice, personal services, retail, entertainment, and daycare. Members of the Task Force brought a wide diversity and scope of knowledge to the discussions, and they have dedicated considerable time and energy to make their contributions to the community. (A full list of members of the Task Force is attached as Appendix 1.) The Task Force met weekly from June 4th through August, and then changed to biweekly meetings for the remainder of 2020. Meetings have included guest presenters, reports from participants on a variety of topics, and extensive group discussion. Surveys have been utilized to obtain information and feedback from task force members and to help determine which issues are most important for businesses during the pandemic and the following recovery.

The Task Force is grateful for the advice and support of Commissioner Thomasina Coates, as well as the efforts and expertise of staff persons from EDD, PGM, and CCDOH. They have been very responsive to the needs of the Task Force and enormously helpful in resolving issues promptly. Members of the Task Force recognize that everyone – businesses and government staff – is working hard to adjust to the new reality of pandemic life. We are in a crisis, and business as usual is not possible. Problem issues must be identified and solutions implemented quickly – all while carrying forward with the regular business of government operations. We want to acknowledge the effort and express our deep appreciation.

THE PANDEMIC BUSINESS CLIMATE IN CHARLES COUNTY

According to the Garner Economics Pivot Plan (attached as Appendix 2), there are more than 2,500 businesses in Charles County. Of them, 1,282 (more than 50%) have fewer than five employees. These microbusinesses are especially vulnerable to the economic impacts of the pandemic, as they may have more employee layoffs and may lack ready access to capital. Data from previous recessions "show that small businesses account for the majority of permanent closures." Garner Economics LLC, "Charles County Economic Development 2020 Pivot Plan," September 24, 2020, p. 15-16. Yet, the microbusinesses, which tend to be small retail shops and restaurants, also provide character, variety, and quality of service which make the community attractive to visitors, residents, and new businesses.



The businesses sectors most affected by COVID-19 have been lodging and food service, retail, daycare, arts/entertainment/recreation, and personal care. Garner Report p. 12. Twenty-three percent of county workers are employed in these vulnerable business sectors, placing the county above the national average but not alarmingly so. Garner Pivot Plan, p. 12. Most of the vulnerable occupations listed by Garner earn less than the average county wage of \$45,365, indicating that the pandemic has had a greater impact on the service economy workers than on white collar workers. These displaced workers may be a group ripe for retraining opportunities. Garner Pivot Plan, p. 15.

Presentations by various business owners in the county about their experiences during the pandemic created a picture of very uneven impact. Some businesses sectors, like real estate and construction, are booming, driven by historically low interest rates and the demand for property outside the large cities. Some medical specialties are facing crushing caseloads while providers of elective medical services and dentists are facing serious loss of income leading to staff layoffs. Carryout and food delivery services are in demand, while full-service dining is severely handicapped by social distancing requirements and indoor capacity limitations. Sadly, some businesses have closed permanently.

The prolonged uncertainty accompanying the progress of the pandemic, with frequent changes in requirements for social distancing and indoor capacity limits, has made it difficult for businesses to plan and adjust their operations. In the warm days of summer, it was hard for business owners to imagine what changes they would have to make for a cold winter with spiking numbers of virus cases. The lagging response from the federal government and the failure to approve an additional economic stimulus package for months left businesses vulnerable and unprepared to survive the harshest period of the pandemic. Anirban Basu, an economist, described this as "leaving businesses running naked into the winter." Keynote Speech, Economic Development Department Fall Meeting, November 10, 2020.

Charles County must continue working quickly and diligently to provide assistance of all kinds to local businesses during the pandemic and the recovery period to follow. Businesses and nonprofits have had to move quickly to adjust to changing levels of health and safety restrictions, and essentially, they have been required to change their business models on the fly with little time for planning and execution. Every change in capacity levels has led to almost immediate changes in hours of operation and staffing. To be effective and helpful, the government response must be prompt.

TASK FORCE PRESENTERS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Public Health Issues

Public health officials provided frequent updates to keep the Task Force informed of newly-discovered information about the way COVID-19 spreads and the changing requirements for social distancing, restrictions on indoor capacity, and other impacts on business operations. The medical and scientific information has helped business owners understand the reasons behind restrictions on their business operations and the resulting loss of income. Dr. Howard Haft, Executive Director, Maryland Primary Care Program, Maryland Department of Health, provided a wealth of information



during his presentation in June to assist businesses reopening, including his thoughts about keeping PPE supplies on hand, creating fresh and safe air flow indoors, and the processes health inspectors must follow when a complaint is made about a business. He emphasized the continuing need for wearing masks, washing hands, and social distancing as the primary means for stopping the spread of COVID-19, and he called for consistent messaging from the government.

Dr. Dianna Abney, Health Officer for Charles County, began regular briefings to the Task Force in October. She explained current research showed that the virus is transmitted by tiny, invisible droplets that float in the air. The smallest droplets spread farther than six feet and can infect people long after the person who coughed leaves the room. The health and safety restrictions being imposed on businesses are based on this well-researched information. Thus, wearing masks and maintaining a minimum of 6 feet of distance between patrons will be mandatory for businesses for the foreseeable future. Business owners were encouraged to improve ventilation by leaving windows open where possible and improving their air circulation systems.

In addition, Dr. Abney warned in October that a second wave of COVID-19 cases was already starting, and a serious increase in cases was forecast for the colder months. She strongly encouraged finding alternative plans for holiday celebrations and suggested that businesses would need to adapt to ongoing, and perhaps increasing, restrictions. In the beautiful, autumn days of October, this was an unwelcome message and difficult to comprehend fully.

Lisa Laschalt, Compliance Office with the Health Department, provided ongoing information about the enforcement and compliance work done by the Health Department. The process of receiving and acting upon complaints was explained to business owners. An outreach worker is sent out within 24 hours of receiving a complaint. The Health Department uses targeted interventions aimed at providing information and hands out bags of PPE for the business to use. CCDOH was receiving a steady number of complaints throughout the summer, mostly from the personal services sector. The complaints increased throughout the fall and started to include other sectors, such as complaints about mechanics and automotive salesmen not wearing masks. After learning that every complaint is investigated in a process that begins with education and suggestions for coming into compliance with health and safety regulations, business owners seemed to be more comfortable with the enforcement protocols.

As the winter approached and colder weather moved people indoors, business owners, especially restaurants, faced new challenges. The pivots that worked during the summer, such as outdoor dining spaces, no longer were feasible. Lisa Laschalt explained that more people being indoors results in more virus laden aerosol droplets spreading through the air. She suggested that businesses evaluate their HVAC systems and filters. MERV 13 filters are recommended by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), and a link was provided for the organization's COVID-19 recommendations. Further, she explained that cold, dry air enables virus droplets to remain in the air longer and increases the chances of the virus spreading. Increasing and maintaining the levels of indoor humidity can be very helpful, either with system adjustments or with room-sized humidifiers. She recommended that portable HEPA filters be used for small spaces like private offices. UV-C technology is also available, but she cautioned that it can produce potentially harmful indoor ozone concentrations over time, and fresh air flow is



needed to counteract that effect. The Centers for Disease Control recommends using the HEPA filters.

Furthermore, the arrival of winter led to increased interest in expanding use of outdoor space, particularly for restaurants. Putting up tents looked like a potential solution to extend seating capacity, but that brought many issues depending on the size and construction of the tent. Tents with sides may be considered permanent structures, not temporary, and permits may be required as well as an outdoor seating permit. Tents with closed sides must meet fire safety standards. And, as Ms. Laschalt explained, if the tent can be fully closed, it essentially becomes another indoor space subject to all the capacity limits and distancing requirements of a brick and mortar building. Since restaurant owners may tend to think of a tent as a temporary structure, the regulatory pitfalls may not be anticipated. Steve Wall, of the Maryland Department of Commerce, suggested that requirements for tents be made clear, perhaps posted and highlighted on the CCDOH and PGM websites.

B. Impact on Business Sectors

Throughout the summer and fall, the Task Force received information and updates from various types of businesses and nonprofits about the impact of the pandemic, their efforts to pivot and adapt their business models, and their suggestions for a government response. The impact of the pandemic has been uneven, with some business sectors flourishing while others are struggling to survive.

Restaurants and Food Service

The restaurant and food service business sector has been severely impacted by the pandemic both nationwide and in Charles County. Garner Pivot Plan, p. 15. But there are wide variations within this sector, depending on the business model, the ability to adjust the floor plan or to move outdoors, and the ability to increase their online presence. The Task Force heard presentations and updates from four local food service businesses.

Angela and Richard Fray, owners of Dat Jerk, a restaurant in Waldorf, reported that their business model included substantial reliance on carryout, so less of a pivot was required. Online ordering and delivery service was already in place before the pandemic. They have explored other options, such as catering and delivering large orders to neighborhoods outside their usual delivery area. Having PPE such as gloves, masks, and hand sanitizer available from the Health Department's PPE Co-op has been a great help. Throughout, they have reported problems finding adequate, reliable staff, and the looming possibility of a recession is an ongoing worry.

Debra Harris, proprietor of Food Scooter, a food delivery service based in Waldorf, reported that her business is extremely busy, and it is difficult to keep up with the number of orders during peak times. She reports great difficulty finding enough drivers and reliable administrative staff to provide smooth service. Food Scooter has trouble with individual restaurant websites jamming, as they lack the capacity to handle the increased demand for carryout. In addition, she stated that curbside pickup lanes outside of restaurants would help improve the service they can provide. She mentioned the ongoing need for PPE, specifically gloves.



John Flatley, owner of the Chick-fil-A in La Plata, spoke of the ways being part of a national corporation helped during the pandemic. For example, before COVID-19 began to spread, the corporation made upgrades to the online platform, which made the pandemic pivot much easier. He has expanded from three pickup locations to fifteen, closed indoor dining, and postponed planned renovations. He emphasized that restaurants need an online platform to survive the pandemic.

Joe Gressis, owner of four restaurants, including Galazio's in La Plata, two locations for OBO Pizza, and Luciana's Steakhouse in Waldorf, told of the different responses required for each type of restaurant. The OBO Pizza stores are doing well, primarily because they were originally set up for carryout and delivery. Galazio's has made adjustments to create a larger outdoor dining area and increase online ordering and carryout. Luciana's, on the other hand, had a unique business plan to mirror a Brazilian steakhouse and provide a more upscale dining experience. The menu and method of service did not convert well to pandemic requirements for social distancing and "touchless" service. The physical location of the restaurant does not allow for expanded outdoor dining, and the style of food preparation did not lend itself to carryout. He spoke of the challenge of planning for cold weather by putting up tents and using outdoor heaters or moving to a seasonal model and laying off staff for the winter because the economics just do not work.

Entertainment and Events

Keith Grasso, owner of Island Music in La Plata, spoke about issues and barriers faced by the events and entertainment business sector. Both performers and venue owners -- as well as related services like catering, florists, photographers, and the makers of party favors, mugs and tote bags -- have suffered almost total loss of income. With the strict limitations on large gatherings, the Rocktober Fest event Mr. Grasso has organized each year has had to be cancelled -- an event that brought in \$150,000 in revenue over the past few years. This is typical for most events, including weddings and large parties, with not much relief in sight. Planning for large events typically begins a year in advance, and the uncertainty regarding containment of the coronavirus makes planning any event before the summer of 2021 very dicey. The limitations on indoor dining also have led to many (if not most) musicians having no venues in which to play. Most musicians performing in local venues are 1099 workers, not employees, with limited access to unemployment benefits. As the pandemic has gone on and on, hopes for holding performances and events in 2021 have faded.

Daycare

Attie Ward, owner of the Children's Learning Tree, in La Plata, presented the challenges confronting daycare providers. Most of the family centered daycare providers have not resumed their business, and nationwide, nearly 60% of daycare centers that closed in response to the spring lockdown have not reopened. The overlay of strict state regulations on daycare providers makes it difficult for providers to adjust to the pandemic environment. Due to social distancing requirements, fewer paying daycare slots are available, but more staff is required, making continuing operations economically impossible for many providers. Constant cleaning and using hand sanitizers have also increased operating costs which cannot be recovered by increasing fees without losing clientele. By November, some local daycare centers were still trying to reopen. An ongoing problem pops up when a parent or child reports positive COVID-19 test results, leading to a two-week closure of the business and loss of income while payroll obligations continue. She reports getting needed



supplies from the PPE Co-op and targeted financial assistance from the Health Department. Safe daycare is a critical need for parents returning to the workforce.

Retail

Keith Grasso, owner of Island Music in La Plata, reported on retail businesses' pivots in response to the pandemic. While stores have been open for shoppers since June, there has been a significant increase in online sales and curbside delivery. He noted a huge drop in walk-in sales in his store, dropping from about 100 sales per day to 25 per day. He has adapted by pivoting to online sales and training junior sales staff for online work. As the year went on, he reported difficulty getting inventory. Deliveries were slow and products became scarce, especially for products made overseas. He reiterated that moving to online sales had been crucial for keeping his business viable. He suggested marketing the Task Force itself and using the group to help spread information. Task Force members could serve as points of contact for local business owners.

Real Estate

Stephen Scott, Esq., a local attorney, and Anne Hooper of Hooper & Associates, reported that the real estate sector has been extremely busy, with a great deal of uncertainty and manic activity. Residential real estate sales are booming, driven by historically low interest rates, people wanting to move out of the cities, and the low number of homes for sale. New construction is booming in response to the increased demand, but building supplies are slow to deliver and the cost of lumber is high. Both speakers expressed concern that lenders are too aggressive, and appraisals are too positive, leading to fears of a market bust similar to what happened in 2008. They reported a shortage of low-cost housing leading to increased homelessness in the County.

Commercial real estate has been busy but uncertain. Businesses are moving to remote work and no longer need as much central office space. Some business owners and CEO's want to move out of urban areas to less crowded locales. No one knows if these are temporary measures or a permanent shift. Many businesses are signing long-term leases, and Ms. Hooper reports seeing many out of county investors. Medical office space and industrial/flex warehouse space are highly sought after in the current market.

Personal Services

The personal services business sector has been hit hard by the pandemic. Fundamentally, it is difficult to operate a barber shop, nail salon, fitness studio, or spa without very close, personal contact, often being face to face customers with only inches of separation. Even with the most careful use of masks and maintaining social distance, there is still a risk, and many people are foregoing haircuts or going to the gym for the duration of the pandemic. All proprietors giving information about the personal services sector were extremely grateful for their loyal customers who were continuing to support the businesses.

Amanda and Jeremy Gray, owners of Southern Maryland Martial Arts, said they have been trying to find opportunities in the problems presented by the pandemic. Their first step was consulting with a website designer and creating a virtual platform. About 85% of their martial arts students joined the virtual platform on Zoom, and many students still use that even though their studios have been able to reopen. While they were able to offer a summer camp program, the regular after school



program serving 75 students was discontinued, causing substantial loss of income. They commented that the County could make it easier for businesses to learn about grant opportunities and other resources available, perhaps by a general email broadcast sent to all businesses periodically.

Cindy Johannesen, owner of Live Out Loud Yoga, reported a similar experience. She moved to offering online classes almost immediately using Zoom and her existing online registration platform. However, personal training sessions and special workshops have come to a halt. Noting the problem of retaining physical studio space while presenting classes online, she reports successfully negotiating rent issues with her landlord and making use of government grants that were available through EDD. In the fall, she was able to begin offering classes in the studio, with strict limitations on the number of persons attending and masks required, and she continued offering the online classes. She reports that teaching yoga online presents challenges, as the teacher cannot check and adjust a student's position and posture.

Task Force members reported that hair stylists, nail salons, and barbers are having difficulties. Social distancing restrictions make it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain the same number of customers. For example, pre-COVID a hair stylist could start one customer's hair color, go to another customer for a haircut while the color was setting, and then finish up the first customer. With COVID-19 restrictions, only one customer at a time per stylist may be in the salon to be served, sharply reducing the income to be earned. Certainly, many former customers are fearful of risking exposure to COVID-19 and are choosing to forego haircuts and manicures for the time being.

Nonprofits and Fundraising

Nonprofit organizations serve the community in a variety of ways, providing food, emergency shelter, medical care, mental health treatment, literacy training, and a variety of other services to fill the gaps in services available from government agencies. Like other sectors of the business community, nonprofits have employees to pay and overhead expenses such as rent and utilities, and they have faced a dramatic drop in income caused by the pandemic. Nonprofits use in-person fundraising events such as galas, dances, wine tastings, auctions, and crab feasts as a major source of income. Those types of events which depend on gathering large groups of people have been prohibited during the pandemic resulting in thousands of dollars of lost revenue and leaving them struggling to serve County residents during a time of extreme need.

Susan Mudd Vogel, former Executive Director of the Charles Regional Medical Center Foundation, reported on efforts to continue fundraising and the pivots required to adapt to the pandemic climate. The popular fall wine tasting event had been bringing in six-figure revenue every year to support the hospital. For the 2020 event, they converted to an online, curbside delivery model and generated \$67,000 in profits. She reported that the support of the community and past contributors was key to the success of the modified event. The Foundation was looking for ways to move their annual gala to an online event, but Ms. Vogel reported that the annual crab feast would not be possible due to pandemic conditions. She emphasized the need for other nonprofits to be creative to adapt their fundraising efforts to the pandemic.



The nonprofit community has been grateful for the CARES Act grant funding offered by the County, and it has been essential for the continuing operations of many nonprofit organizations. Grant funds were distributed to nonprofits in four rounds via the Charles County Charitable Trust.

C. Economic Development

EDD staff has been working diligently throughout the pandemic to meet the needs of local businesses while keeping up momentum for economic development projects geared to bringing new businesses to the County. The monumental task of distributing millions of dollars in state, federal, and county grant money was assigned to EDD and completed successfully. In response to business concerns, EDD established a Who to Call List to help citizens and business owners locate the right government staff person to help with specific issues, set up a Back to Business web-based tool with the Charles County Chamber of Commerce to help businesses notify potential customers that they were reopened after the state-ordered lockdown in the spring, and created Shop Safe videos highlighting the steps local businesses have taken to ensure that proper precautions are taken provide customers with a safe setting. The grants and several other EDD initiatives in response to the pandemic are discussed separately to highlight their importance to the business community.

The Task Force also received reports on EDD projects in the process of development. Taylor Yewell, Development Chief of EDD, presented information about Waldorf Station, a project being developed by Greenberg Gibbons comprised of two large parcels which will straddle Route 301 at the north end of the County. It has a proposed half million square feet of commercial space, half of that to be retail, and 800 residential units. The east side of the project includes a 4,500 square foot medical office complex. The project uses an open-air concept with landscaping and water features. Mr. Yewell noted that open air centers are doing better than enclosed malls, a pre-COVID trend. Intended as a walkable area and a destination, the project also provides opportunities for workers to remain in the county rather than commuting to other jurisdictions.

Other EDD projects also emphasize new medical office space, consistent with health care being one of the department's target industries. A new Medstar medical office building recently opened on the corner of Route 301 and St. Patrick's Drive in Waldorf, and the County has announced that Kaiser-Permanente will build a large medical center just south of Billingsley Road.

D. Planning and Zoning

Throughout the Task Force meetings, issues involving planning and zoning were discussed. The Task Force received ongoing reports from Jason Groth, Deputy Director of PGM, and learned that PGM has undertaken several initiatives that have helped local businesses during the pandemic. In the early summer, in response to a Task Force recommendation, PGM eased temporary sign restrictions, waived temporary sign permit fees, and enacted a temporary express process for business banners and temporary signs to help businesses alert the customers that they were open for business. In addition, PGM has initiated new flexibility and express processing for outdoor seating applications for restaurants, added a drop box outside the County government building to create a contact-free drop off point for plans and documents, and posted all applications and instructional resources on their website as much as possible. They are working on website



improvements to provide a simpler, more user-friendly experience, and Mr. Groth mentioned the need for all County websites to be coordinated to help direct citizens and businesses to the information they seek. PGM has undertaken a comprehensive zoning code update, looking at drive-through and curbside pick-up areas with a new perspective. Recent zoning code amendments for the Business Park Zone include provisions for drive-through windows with specific controls which were not previously permitted. Ongoing, PGM is trying to be as flexible and reasonable as possible in their response to the needs of businesses during the pandemic and will be building that flexibility into regulatory updates. They are investigating the expansion of home-based businesses permitted in the County, and a legislative proposal is in the works to allow hair stylists to operate home businesses with appropriate consideration for traffic and noise in surrounding neighborhoods. PGM is investigating ways to include greater flexibility in the use of retail space throughout the county and to develop greater flexibility in permitted uses in the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor Zones.

Several times during the meetings, Task Force members raised concerns about the permitting process. Early on, there was concern for permits expiring before the work could be completed due to pandemic delays. PGM has assisted by extending expiring permits for six months or longer upon request of the applicant. Streamlining the permitting process is a perennial complaint which has become critically important in the pandemic environment when businesses need to make changes quickly to remain open. PGM has taken steps to improve the permitting process and to make online applications easier to navigate. In addition, PGM waived fees for temporary sign permits through September 30th. The Task Force appreciates these efforts to make the permitting process user-friendly and encourages PGM to keep looking for ways to make a complex system easier to navigate.

In addition, the Task Force received information and suggestions from one of its members, David Jenkins, a consultant. Mr. Jenkins provided numerous articles and reports with information about how other communities were helping their local businesses during the pandemic. Many of these ideas are already under consideration in the work being done by PGM, and the Task Force encourages the County to continue emphasizing walkability, supporting and encouraging small businesses, locating businesses close to the neighborhoods where people live, and providing as much flexibility as possible to help businesses make quick, necessary changes to continue operating as health and safety requirements shift in response to different phases of the pandemic.

E. Broadband Access

Marcia Keeth, Deputy Director of EDD, presented a report on the County's efforts to extend broadband coverage to unserved areas of the County. Using a \$6 million grant from the state, the County will enter into a public-private partnership to provide broadband to Cobb Neck and Nanjemoy. She explained the problems presented by rural areas where houses and businesses are spread out, noting that it costs roughly \$50,000 per mile to run broadband. Since broadband services are provided by private companies, the infrastructure costs are prohibitively expensive for the limited revenue to be generated from the few new subscribers available in less populated areas. The County has a Broadband Task Force in place and has used the services of a consultant to



address these issues. Great progress is being made, yet it will take approximately three years to get the broadband infrastructure in place.

In the meantime, rural residents need broadband access to work remotely, to help their children participate in online education, and to engage in online commerce. The Task Force suggests that the County quickly take steps to provide as many hot spots and free zones in or near underserved areas as possible. Access to broadband is an essential service during this pandemic and going forward.

F. Consumer Confidence

Sandy Sponaugle, a consultant with Platinum PR, presented information about the Consumer Confidence Campaign she is working on for EDD. Her team has been advising EDD to think more locally and to focus on business retention and support for existing businesses. Her work with EDD includes trying to convince consumers that it is safe to shop locally rather than buying everything online. The campaign will use social media, short videos, and blogs to highlight local businesses and the precautions they are taking to ensure safe shopping locally. For example, the videos show pictures of people working with masks on, hand sanitizer on the counters, and informational signs on business doors indicating that businesses are following strict health guidelines to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

G. Tourism

Ashley Chenault, Tourism Chief, reported on the County's efforts to promote tourism. She hoped the welcome center would be able to reopen in October. Her office has undertaken a "mask up" campaign to ensure that public health recommendations are followed. For the fiscal year ending in June 2020, ten sporting events were negotiated having an economic impact of \$5 million, an example of how tourism can be an engine for economic development. However, the pandemic brought a sharp reduction in events due to pandemic restrictions, although some small bass fishing tournaments were able to proceed in the fall. The office has created a new website at ExploreCharlesCounty.com. She said the Tourism Office has modified their logo, will be using social media platforms to create virtual tours, and is enhancing the County's presence on social media. She informed the Task Force that the biggest draw for the County is the National Marine Sanctuary at Mallows Bay, which attracts international attention. Members of the Task Force were interested in having a tourism booth at Mallows Bay to provide visitors with information about other things to see and do once they are in the County. Task Force members asked if Tourism could collaborate and coordinate with local businesses to promote events and help visitors find local hotels and restaurants, as well as creating package offers related to the specific activity.

H. Grant Programs and Other Financial Assistance

Throughout the summer and fall, the Task Force received updates from EDD and CCDOH about the various grant programs available for businesses and nonprofits. These programs have been a life preserver for businesses struggling to remain open in the face of restrictions on indoor capacity, social distancing requirements, increased staffing needs, and reduced revenue. The EDD has handled applications for federal, state, and county funded grants and loans, distributing more than



\$4 million dollars to local businesses. The Health Department has administered three different programs: 1) the PPE Grant Reimbursement Grant Program distributed \$130,000 to reimburse business owners and nonprofits for expenses they incurred purchasing necessary items like gloves, hand sanitizer, protective gowns, and disinfectants; 2) the Small Business Relief Grant Program disbursed \$1 million; and 3) the Community Outreach and Education Program for Nonprofits disbursed \$870,000. In addition, the CCHD continues to operate the PPE Co-op, providing businesses and nonprofits with essential PPE items at no cost. The Co-op was able to place orders for enough supplies to last until March 2021.

I. Chambers of Commerce

Bonnie Grady, President and CEO of the Charles County Chamber of Commerce, and Doris Commack-Spencer, Executive Director of the Southern Maryland Minority Chamber of Commerce, participated actively in the Task Force discussions and presented several updates on the activities of their organizations. The two chambers are essential partners to the County government in serving the needs of businesses and nonprofits. They work diligently to notify their members of the changing pandemic health requirements and new programs, grants, and loans available to local businesses. The CCCC created a 34-page, interactive guide on their website to help businesses reopen safely after the spring lockdown, and it offered a Charles County Strong membership event offering access to the Chamber resources through August 31st at no charge. The SMMBCOC has undertaken a concerted effort to update its membership rolls and reach out to all the minority-owned businesses in the tri-county area, mostly microbusinesses with fewer than ten employees. With the help of a grant from the CCDOH, they have undertaken a door-to-door campaign reaching out primarily to minority-owned businesses to provide information about grant programs and resources available to assist with adapting to the pandemic climate. Ms. Commack-Spencer noted that the microbusinesses are unlikely to be hooked into traditional channels for distributing information, so they often miss opportunities for grant funding and they are more susceptible to business interruptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

County agencies and the Commissioners are working intently to respond to the needs of the community during the pandemic. Many issues are already being addressed after being raised in Task Force meetings, as diligent government staff carried ideas back to their offices for implementation. Members of the Task Force recognize and applaud the effort to respond promptly to the concerns of the business community.

The pandemic is not over, however, and a quick end is unlikely. As the work of the Task Force was ending in December 2020, we were entering a dark period with coronavirus cases spiking dramatically nationwide and death tolls projected to reach 450,000 by the end of January 2021. Even with prompt distribution of newly approved vaccines, health officials warn us that we must be vigilant to bring the spread of COVID-19 under control. The need for masks and social distancing will likely continue throughout 2021, which will mean ongoing restrictions on businesses and nonprofits and the continuing need for accurate information and support.



The recommendations below were discussed and approved by a clear majority of Task Force members. Most of them received unanimous approval. Some recommendations are presented as broad areas that need attention, while others are more specific projects or proposed solutions. Overall, the Task Force strongly encourages continued collaboration between the various government agencies and the local private sector.

A. Communications and Messaging

Communication is the lifeline for all communities, and getting the word out quickly and accurately is crucial in the midst of a pandemic. While various communication and messaging platforms were being used by government agencies, it became apparent through the work of the Task Force that important information was not reaching local business owners as hoped. Often, business owners reported feeling overwhelmed by rapidly shifting circumstances and the difficulty in finding clear, timely information.

Businesses and nonprofits need accurate and timely information about health and safety requirements, as well as about resources and programs available to assist them. Several Task Force members have reported speaking with local business owners in November and December 2020 and finding that they knew nothing about the grants available from EDD and CCDOH, nor had they ever heard of the PPE Co-op. Health Department staff also reported difficulty in getting the word out to local businesses owners about the grants and PPE available.

There is no single, simple way to communicate with businesses and nonprofits in the County. We no longer have a local newspaper with wide general circulation, and the Southern Maryland radio station primarily covers St. Mary's County. Government agencies continually work to ensure that good information is available on individual agency websites, but there has been little coordination. The result has been fragmented or incomplete information, with smaller businesses often not getting the message at all.

A county-wide community engagement strategy is necessary, both for conveying timely information about COVID-19 and for more routine publication of information about the affairs of the County. Merely emulating pre-COVID communication methods will not be sufficient. The shift to virtual platforms has been necessary, but it also has the effect of leaving out those without broadband access and those with minimal literacy skills, including people learning English as a second language. The County has worked to upgrade its capabilities with programs like the Citizen Academy, and those initiatives need to be continued and expanded.

A glossy flyer received in the mail in December from Charles County Government is a good example of the kind of focused, consistent messaging about COVID-19 that is needed. It contained safety tips for the holidays, information on virus testing, and a list of resources for individuals and families needing assistance. Other initiatives may now be underway, but they are not included here, as December 17, 2020, was the last meeting date for the Task Force to receive updated information.

The EDD produces weekly Business Updates, sent out electronically, which provide a wealth of timely information about grants, explanations about new or changing restrictions on business



operations as soon as the Governor makes an announcement, and announcements about new EDD initiatives. Many small business owners do not seem to be aware that this and other excellent resources are available.

In addition, the Task Force applauds the work of the Charles County Chamber of Commerce, the Southern Maryland Minority Business Chamber, and the Nonprofit Institute. These organizations have been valuable partners to the government agencies in providing timely information to their members. They have an important role to play for a unified response to the pandemic.

The Task Force offers the following recommendations for improving communication with local businesses and nonprofits for health and safety information about the pandemic and news about resources available to assist:

1. **Undertake an in-depth, county-wide review of messaging and communications strategy** and establish a centralized process for communicating with the business and nonprofit community. A collaborative effort is recommended, including members of the business and nonprofit community, perhaps in the form of another task force or committee organized under the Economic Development Advisory Board. Special effort needs to be made to establish contacts with the small businesses and sole proprietorships who have been most affected by COVID-19.
2. **Produce a regular COVID-19 communication with information specific to Charles County** by coordinating the Public Information Officers for the County, the Health Department, the Sheriff, the Board of Education, Emergency Services, Charles Regional Hospital, and others. It could include the latest COVID numbers and areas where cases are spiking, grant information and contact information, a business corner, information about Phases of reopening or newly tightened restrictions, news by industry sector, prevention reminders, updates, pertinent contact numbers, and perhaps, short clips from government and community leaders. Messaging should be uniform and can be shared via social media, websites, print media, and other resources available to the County. Similar communication blasts could be used to notify businesses and nonprofits about grants and other resources available from EDD, CCDOH, and other agencies. Electronic communications allow a large number of people to receive information quickly, but if not read immediately, they tend to get lost in the flood of incoming messages. A printed message, like the December glossy flyer mentioned above, is more likely to be pinned to a bulletin board and viewed more than once. Having uniform and direct communication would eliminate a great deal of frustration and confusion as we navigate the coming months of the pandemic.
3. **Explore utilizing one central site (such as the Charles County Government website, CharlesCountyMD.gov) to streamline communications and coordinate messaging.** The most important information about the pandemic and available resources should be accessible from a central point with links to make it easy for residents and businesses to navigate to other agencies and business organizations. One Task Force member commented: "I lost count of how many people told me they couldn't find the PPE information on the Health Department website. It's not there, then it is, then it's on the



county website" Important information about available grants, for example, should be accessible regardless of which "door" a business owner opens.

A data dashboard could be incorporated into the central site with information about the progress of the pandemic in Charles County, including the number of cases, hospital bed capacity, number of residents vaccinated, etc. While national data is readily available, it is not easy to find out what is happening in our community. The data dashboard could be copied to other agency websites as appropriate.

Along the same lines, a checklist of steps to be taken to publicize new and existing programs could be created and made available to all county agencies to promote uniform messaging. This could include press releases for local media, Facebook postings, Twitter messages, posting messages on Nextdoor, single-page handouts, and links on all government web sites.

4. **Develop a single, one-page outline of current financial assistance available to businesses and nonprofits**, including grant opportunities, available pandemic supplies, loans, and other resources. The outline should be updated regularly, and appropriate contact information should be included. Aggregating information from multiple agencies offering grant funding or other services to businesses and nonprofits would make it easier to locate essential information and access resources that can help them survive the ongoing pandemic climate and start to rebuild. For example, a one-page flyer listing both the EDD grants and the CCHD grants and eligibility requirements would have been helpful and would have eliminated a great deal of confusion. The information should be available electronically and in print.
5. **Publicize the work of the Task Force and its members.** The members can serve as contact points and conduits to steer business owners to those who can provide information.
6. **Pursue creating a business ombudsman** to coordinate with all county agencies and liaison with the business and nonprofit community. Previously, ombudsman positions have been suggested for PGM and for EDD. Putting an ombudsman under the county administrator's office would provide a much-needed, single point of contact for the business community and a government-wide platform for outreach efforts. An ombudsman would provide a direct connection between the county government and all local businesses and nonprofits for the timely distribution of essential information. One Task Force member reports that Calvert County has already taken this step and the liaison has been successful, especially for new and expanding businesses needing to interact with several agencies to implement their plan.
7. **Emphasize personal contact and outreach** in addition to electronic communication. COVID-19 revealed that using electronic forms of communication is essential for getting information out quickly, but as noted above, many businesses are not connected. As suggested by Health Department staff, a conversation with a business owner, either in



person or by telephone, can generate valuable information about the needs of the community and provide necessary feedback about existing programs. Volunteers could be trained to assist with outreach. Task Force members suggested that they could serve as outreach ambassadors for the near term, endeavoring to spread the word to all businesses about opportunities and information available to assist them during the pandemic.

8. **Make periodic efforts to remind business owners and nonprofit organizations that information is available on the EDD website or the CCDOH website.** In particular, the microbusinesses with fewer than five employees tend not to be as tuned in to online resources or too busy to check on a regular basis. Occasional information campaigns to highlight agency websites or phone numbers to call for specific information can be very helpful to connect people with needed resources. The recent glossy flyer announcing phone numbers to call for information about getting the COVID vaccine in Charles County is an excellent example, as is the current Maryland effort across many media platforms urging people to use the covidvax.Maryland.gov website.
9. **Increase messaging about necessary precautions required during the COVID-19 pandemic** and use all available forms of publicizing the message. Businesses and nonprofits need the help of local government to remind the public about wearing masks and social distancing. Increased messaging is especially important now as vaccines become available, but the general population is still vulnerable to COVID. All too often, people have become complacent, and businesses struggle to find a balance between enforcement and customer service.

B. Economic Development Issues

Economic development includes both attracting new businesses to a community and working to support and retain existing businesses. The COVID-19 pandemic has made support for existing local businesses an urgent matter. No one wants to see shuttered storefronts and empty office space. The EDD has undertaken many new initiatives to help local business owners, and the Task Force recognizes the hard work and appreciates the response to local needs. The Task Force makes the following recommendations to build on those efforts.

1. **Shop Local and Shop Safe** are messages that need to be emphasized continually and consistently. Once consumers become accustomed to shopping online, the local businesses are often left behind, and shoppers become more isolated and less connected to the community. Yet, quality products and excellent service are available locally. As noted above, small businesses provide ambiance that is attractive to those seeking to relocate to an area. The EDD has undertaken a consumer confidence initiative, with the assistance of a consultant, to increase support for local businesses and to show that local shopping is safe. Using videos, Facebook, and a blog series, local businesses have been featured including discussions of safety measures, pictures of masks in use, social distance measures, curbside deliveries, and availability of hand sanitizers. The Task Force urges that this excellent initiative be continued.



2. **Continue to create coordinated and shared marketing campaigns** to promote shopping and dining locally. Newspaper articles and press conferences spotlighting local businesses are useful tools difficult for most small businesses to access on their own. Businesses could participate with special promotions for an occasion or a particular event sponsored by EDD or Tourism. Shared marketing would afford small businesses the opportunity to advertise to a larger audience on potentially more effective advertising platforms. The Shop Safe campaign has begun this work, and it should be continued and expanded.
3. **Continue to encourage, support, and retain small businesses.** The value of small businesses to a community is well documented. According to Michael Sherman, an economist and author specializing in community economics, more than two dozen studies have shown the value of small, local businesses to their communities. He says, "Every single one of them shows that every single dollar spent at a local business leads to two to four times the amount of jobs, income and wealth, tax collections and charitable contributions. There's no magic to it—it's basic economics that companies that are local have more local relationships, and that's what creates this disproportionate positive effect." Michael H. Sherman, quoted in "The Crucial Role Small Businesses Play in Their Communities," <https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/valuable-players-crucial-role-small-businesses-play-communities/>. And the benefits are not just measured in dollars. An article by the Better Business Bureau challenges: "Imagine your hometown or local community. Go to the main street or shopping district in your mind. Now imagine it without any small businesses. Instantly, the area loses everything that makes it unique and brings charm. Small businesses provide character and individuality to a community. It is neighbors helping neighbors — friends helping friends. However, small businesses are more than that. They benefit their local communities in many concrete, quantifiable ways." "Ten Ways Small Businesses Benefit their Communities," BBB (April 23, 2019), <https://medium.com/@BBBNWP/10-ways-small-businesses-benefit-their-local-communities-7273380c90a9> EDD has been exploring ways to support small businesses, and several initiatives are under consideration. The Task Force recommendations dovetail that ongoing work in many ways, and the Task Force urges that the work continue to support and retain small businesses in the County.
4. **Consider expanding the local-first procurement policy.** The COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession have been a wake-up call to local and state governments, in particular, to rethink procurement processes in order to make it easier for small businesses to compete. The Shop Local Business Enterprise Program has been in place for several years, and the Task Force would like for the County to expand that program as much as possible under the law to create opportunities for local businesses.
5. **Work to build local and regional supply chains.** One of the problems quickly uncovered during the pandemic was the need for supply chains closer to home. The County has started the work to connect local and regional anchor institutions like schools, hospitals, and large corporations. In the process of securing PPE for its co-op, CCDOH reached out to small manufacturers and distilleries to pivot their business models to produce hand



sanitizer and other PPE items which were not otherwise available. Similar efforts to connect with smaller manufacturers and procure products from them would help strengthen the local economy and make the County less dependent on shipments from afar. The Task Force also uncovered a need to make training available for the entrepreneurs interested in manufacturing products needed for local and regional markets. The training would help them get established and grow their businesses.

C. Planning and Development issues

Planning and development issues have both short-term and long-term impact on the business and nonprofit community. The County currently has several projects underway that will enhance the business climate and provide new opportunities. The Task Force makes the following recommendations as suggestions for current and future planning.

1. **Home Occupation Restrictions could be waived, at least temporarily.** Many jobs have shifted to remote work and are likely to remain so for months to come, and social distancing requirements have made personal service jobs much less profitable. Neighborhoods have become job centers, and some degree of that shift is likely to remain after the crisis stage of the pandemic. The County already has proposed legislation to allow hair stylists to operate from their homes, and similar accommodations could be considered for other kinds of businesses, such as nail salons, barbers, or meal preparation/catering services, with appropriate consideration for noise levels and traffic flow in residential neighborhoods.
2. **Consider allowing commercial spaces to be used for pop-up ventures to seed the next generation of entrepreneurs.** Some commercial buildings are going to be caught in a kind of financial purgatory, unable to fill vacant space at current lease rates but unable to reduce rents due to existing financing agreements. The Task Force recognizes that the EDD, College of Southern Maryland, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, SBDC, the Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations already have various programs and initiatives supporting this proposal and are coordinating their efforts. Creating a temporary use and occupancy permit for a short-term pop-up venture or a program allowing business and property owners to obtain a blanket use and occupancy permit for shared space would afford new real estate opportunities and help minimize start-up space costs for budding entrepreneurs and new business.
3. **Evaluate adaptations to the housing codes to encourage creation of affordable housing.** The lack of affordable housing is a problem in many communities. COVID has generated an even greater need and exposed a disparity and inequality in housing. The news media is replete with stories of jobs lost and families adjusting to shelter more relatives under the same roof. In the post pandemic world, the search for affordable housing will continue, as will the need for homeowners to increase their own income to avoid foreclosure. Legalizing accessory dwelling units, basement or garage apartments, and duplex conversions could be an efficient means for matching the need for affordable housing with homeowners needing additional income flow.



4. **Quick and lean investments to encourage walking and biking can help promote local businesses and free up private capital within the community.** With the job losses and economic hardship caused by the pandemic, families and individuals are seeking to reduce their living expenses. In addition, the requirements of social distancing are leading residents to seek more opportunities for usable outdoor space. Individuals and families that are able to reduce their reliance on owning and operating motor vehicles can save thousands of dollars each year and redirect that money toward more urgent needs. Bicycle lanes and clear, safe foot paths are relatively low cost and easily put in place compared to major economic development projects. Examples include painting road shoulders to highlight pedestrian walkways and bicycle lanes. See <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/>. The County already has plans in progress for expanding the network of sidewalks, bicycle paths, and public spaces, but the sudden changes to everyday life brought on by COVID-19 have brought a greater need for these amenities.
5. **Streamline the permitting process and make zoning more small business friendly.** Members of the Task Force raised this issue numerous times during the meetings. A business-friendly zoning code reflects the community's vision for the future and provides a development framework to make that happen. Regressive zoning codes focus on preventing undesirable activities without allowing opportunities to develop projects that would have a positive effect on the community. The Task Force heard reports from PGM indicating that a zoning code review is underway, and considerable work has been done to move the permitting process online and provide extensive guides. The permitting process is complex, and providing a checklist of required steps, especially for smaller projects, would be helpful and potentially could reduce development costs and allow more diverse development opportunities. We recommend that the forward momentum be sustained and accelerated.
6. **Consider allowing Accessory Commercial Units (ACUs) to include accessory apartments and live-work units.** ACUs allow homeowners to generate additional income and renters to access affordable commercial space within neighborhoods which have increasingly become job centers during the pandemic. Careful planning, including evaluation of multi-modal traffic patterns and street types would be required.
7. **Enable mixed-use zoning and update the zoning map.** Many small businesses may not be able to survive the pandemic climate. Empty commercial space results in losses to the county tax base which can be mitigated by diversifying the property uses allowed under the zoning code. Mixed-use zoning districts allow changes in use to be made without constant rezoning and help municipal budgets be more resilient to changes in the business climate. A mixture of compatible uses allows live-work and work-live spaces and facilitates uses such as quiet, clean artisanal manufacturing. A review and update of the County zoning ordinance is underway, and the Task Force recommends that mixed-use districts be included, particularly in commercial corridors and in neighborhood commercial centers.



D. Tourism

Tourism can be an engine for business growth and economic development. The following suggestions are recommended by the Task Force to maximize the opportunities presented by the County's historic sites and outdoor recreation opportunities.

1. **Collaborate with local businesses when planning events.** Businesses may coordinate special promotions, discounts for event participants, etc. to coincide with the event.
2. **Promote hiking and biking trails** which provide an attractive amenity for residents and support economic development by bringing visitors to the county. Outdoor access and opportunities for physical activity are extremely important during the pandemic. The plan for expanding the Indian Head Rail Trail to connect with the Three Notch Trail in St. Mary's County, currently being explored by PGM, is an excellent example of this kind of initiative and provides an opportunity for joint marketing throughout the region.
3. **Build collaboration and ensure coordination between** County agencies, particularly the Tourism Office, EDD, PGM, CCDOH, and the local business community. Tourism is a driver for economic development, and partnerships with other agencies and the community are essential for success.

E. The PPE Co-op

The PPE Co-op established by the Health Department has been open since August providing masks, gloves, gowns, disinfectants, hand sanitizers, and other forms of PPE to local businesses and nonprofits. The Task Force unanimously requests that this initiative be maintained for the duration of the pandemic. CCDOH staff has assured us that sufficient supplies will be available until March, based on making purchases in advance, and we are hopeful that federal, state, and local funding will be made available to allow for this continuing source of PPE supplies.

F. Broadband Access

Broadband access has become a critical need in these times of remote schooling and working from home. The County has undertaken a grant-funded expansion of broadband to parts of Nanjemoy and Cobb Neck. Due to the exorbitant costs of increasing the necessary infrastructure, many small pocket areas will remain without access for the foreseeable future. The Task Force recommends that more internet hot spots and free zones be created to help increase internet access countywide, particularly near areas that do not presently have service.

G. Daycare

The daycare business sector has been severely impacted by the restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic nationwide as well as in Charles County. The heavy overlay of state health and safety regulations for daycare providers makes it difficult to adjust their business model or to make changes in the way space is utilized. The availability of grants and the PPE Co-op have been a great



help to the daycare providers who have been able to reopen their businesses, and ongoing relief will be important.

H. Technical Assistance

Technical assistance for businesses and nonprofits is available from several sources like the EDD, the Nonprofit Institute, the SBDC, and the two Chambers of Commerce. The Task Force notes that the businesses able to pivot quickly to an online business model have done relatively well during the pandemic. Businesses that have not had that capability will need continuing access to technical help to remain viable through the coming months of the pandemic.

I. Support for Small Businesses

Emphasis on support for small businesses should continue. According to the Garner Pivot Plan, more than half of Charles County businesses have fewer than five employees and are especially vulnerable during the pandemic recession. In past recessions, small businesses accounted for most of the permanent closures. Garner Pivot Plan, pp. 14-15. They tend to have fewer resources than larger corporations to draw on during hard times. Small businesses and restaurants provide ambiance and can be a magnet for drawing visitors and new businesses to the county. Small businesses are vital to thriving communities. They help strengthen and diversify neighborhoods and provide pathways for innovation and entrepreneurship. Main Street America, www.mainstreet.org.

The grant money from the federal, state, and county governments and the PPE Co-op have provided essential support for small businesses which should be continued, and other opportunities for financial relief should be explored.

J. Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations need continuing support and a streamlined, efficient process for awarding grants. Nonprofit organizations provide a panoply of necessary services to the community and fill in gaps that government agencies cannot cover. Fundraising, the customary means for nonprofits to generate income, has been badly handicapped by health and safety regulations required during the pandemic. Continued support for nonprofit organizations is essential and urgent.

K. Ongoing Collaboration Between Government and Businesses

Successful economic development requires ongoing collaboration between the public and private sectors, including county and state agencies, businesses owners, and representatives from business organizations. The mix of voices on the Task Force, with both government and private enterprise represented, made for a lively exchange of ideas and information. More importantly, many issues raised were able to be resolved on the spot or through continued discussion outside of the scheduled meetings. Inclusion of business and nonprofit representatives helps to get buy-in for new initiatives and keeps planning anchored to real life experiences.



CONCLUSION

The Task Force has explored many issues affecting the Charles County business community during the COVID-19 pandemic. We discovered that many resources are available and government agencies are working to help, but information is not always getting to businesses, particularly the microbusinesses. Our understanding of the coronavirus itself is growing constantly as more and more scientific information becomes available, and we recognize that the health requirements will change. Uncertainty prevails. While vaccines for COVID-19 are now being distributed, we are also hearing news of more contagious mutations of the virus. Businesses will need to make rapid changes in response to the ongoing health crisis and continuing support from the County Government will be critically important.

Collaboration between businesses and the government is crucial during a crisis. The Task Force has provided a channel for local business owners to bring their concerns to the attention of government departments and other agencies. Members of the Task Force have frequently expressed their great appreciation for the opportunity to discuss the challenges they face and for their ideas to be heard. Members of the Task Force also deeply appreciate this opportunity to collaborate and provide information to the County Government about their challenges in this rapidly shifting pandemic environment.

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner Thomasina Coates
Co-Chair

Hon. Helen Harrington, Senior Judge
Co-Chair

Stephen Scott, Esquire
Vice Chair



APPENDIX 1

CHARLES COUNTY COVID-19 RECOVERY TASK FORCE MEMBERS

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Charles County Economic Development 2020 Pivot Plan

September 24, 2020

Prepared for:



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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Charles County (Maryland) Economic Development Department (EDD) retained Garner Economics, LLC to create a 2020 Pivot Plan for proactive initiatives amid the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Charles County, Maryland



In November 2019, the report **SHAPING THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF CHARLES COUNTY 2.0: REFRESH AND RECALIBRATE** was published. This and past engagements by Garner Economics allow the team to develop a deep knowledge of Charles County to assist during this time. Although many of the recommendations and targets of the 2019 report remain intact, the COVID-19 pandemic requires economic developers to re-evaluate actions to help their communities. To economic developers, an event such as this has never been experienced.

Beginning in March 2020, a novel virus outbreak, referred to as COVID-19, reached the United States. With no proved vaccines developed and widespread community transmission of the disease, most states enacted measures aimed at limiting the passing of COVID-19. Recommendations and mandates included the temporary closures of restaurants, stores, and workplaces where contact with others was likely. Shelter in place, working from home, and remote learning became the standard lifestyle of many Americans. This historic event continues to have an adverse economic impact on a global level impacting nearly every business. Few sectors have actually thrived.

Measures

This report is structured in two parts: research results and recommendations. Chapter 2 presents data on initial indicators that show the effect of the pandemic compared to Maryland and the nation, such as unemployment and initial claims.

Included are measures of vulnerability for Charles County's businesses and workers. Several economic models evaluate the industries that will be most affected by actions taken to control COVID-19. Elements of these models were combined to gauge vulnerability and occupations that are employed by these sectors. Additional data shows the structure of Charles County's business community to reveal other possible areas that may need assistance.

Pivot Initiatives

Chapter 3 explores ways the economic development department can pivot with recommendations to continue to build on the County's proactive programs. The chapter will review changes in the U.S. related to COVID-19 and economic development. These include geographic advantage, new opportunities in several industry sectors, and how community product may be realigned to meet changing needs. These three key trends noted below may affect Charles County:

Suburban Areas and Mid-Size Cities

Likely Areas for Expansion in the Next Year

Supply Chain Reshaping

Opportunities in Multiple Sectors

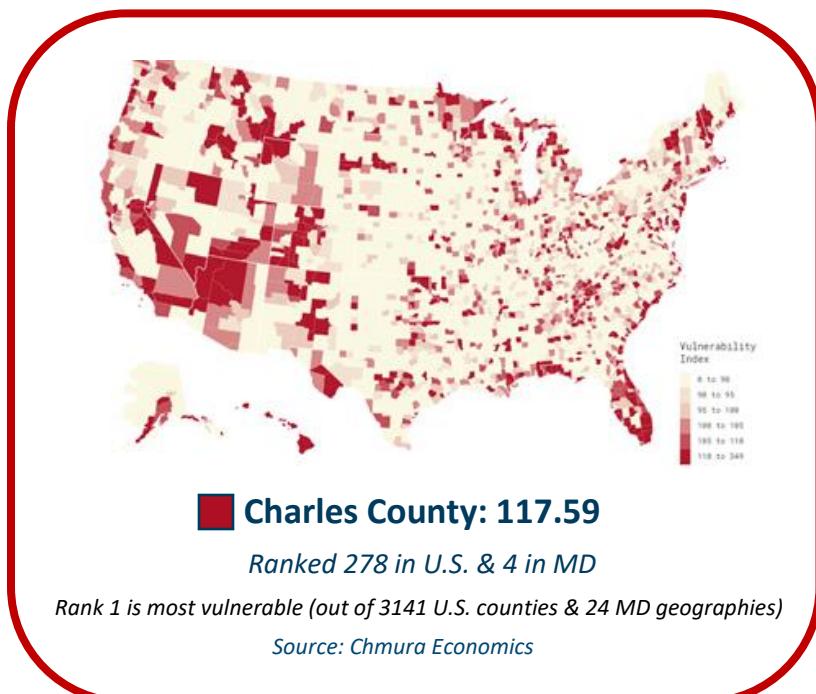
Product Realignment

Retail to Industrial Conversion

Target Additions

Finally, Chapter 4 contains information on target business sector additions to Charles County's existing plan to take advantage of new opportunities as patterns have changed drastically with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 2: Indicators & Projections of COVID-19 Effects



Deloitte COVID-19 Economic Vulnerability Index

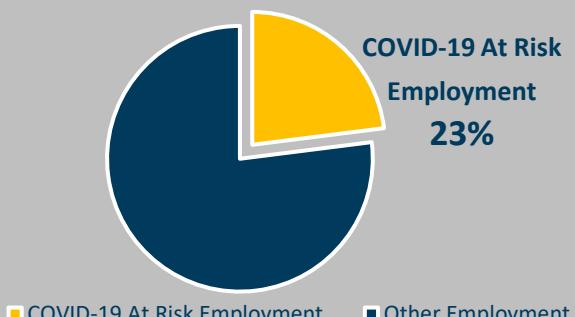
1

Charles County Score

(1=least vulnerable, 5=most vulnerable)

Source: Deloitte Insights

Charles County COVID-19 Vulnerable Industry Employment



Charles County COVID-19 Vulnerable Industry Employment



Charles County Unemployment

3.6%
Avg. Annual 2019

9.6%
Peak (5-20)

7.3%
Aug '20

Maryland Unemployment

3.6%
Avg. Annual 2019

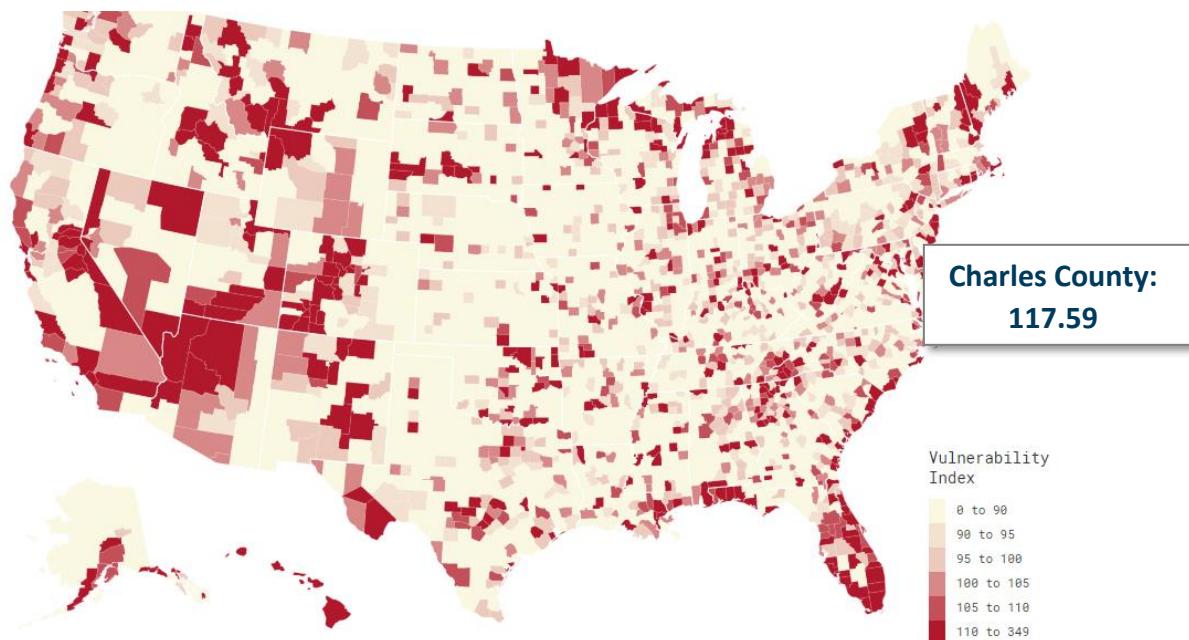
9.8%
Peak (4-20)

6.9%
Aug '20

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Economic Vulnerability Indices

Figure 2.1 Chmura Economic Vulnerability Index Map



Source: Chmura Vulnerability Index, Chmura Economics

Chmura Economics

The Chmura Economics Vulnerability Index¹ is a measurement of the negative impact the pandemic can have on the employment base of an area's mix of industries. Job contractions of industry sectors are projected as a percentage. For example, accommodation and food services are projected to lose more jobs (more than 50% on average) compared to utilities and education services. The average score is 100 which represents the average job loss expected. Higher scores indicate higher levels of job contractions and a low score would mean fewer than average job losses as a result of the pandemic. The index models potential impact and does not include a region's rate of virus infection nor local government's policies in reaction to the virus.

Charles County's Vulnerability Index score is 117.59 which is above the national average of 100. Overall, this is ranked 278th out of 3,141 U.S. counties and 4th among Maryland geographies. A higher score indicates a more vulnerable industry mix which could lead to job losses. For reference, Gilpin County, Colorado has a Vulnerability Index score of 348.83 and Butte County, Idaho has a score of 9.54.

Table 2.1 Chmura Economics Top Sectors for Average Projected Job Losses

Industry Sector	Percent of Average Projected Job Losses (U.S.)
Accommodation and Food Services	> 60%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	> 60%
Other Services	10-25%
Transportation and Warehousing	10-25%
Retail Trade	10-25%
Wholesale Trade	10-25%
Information	10-25%

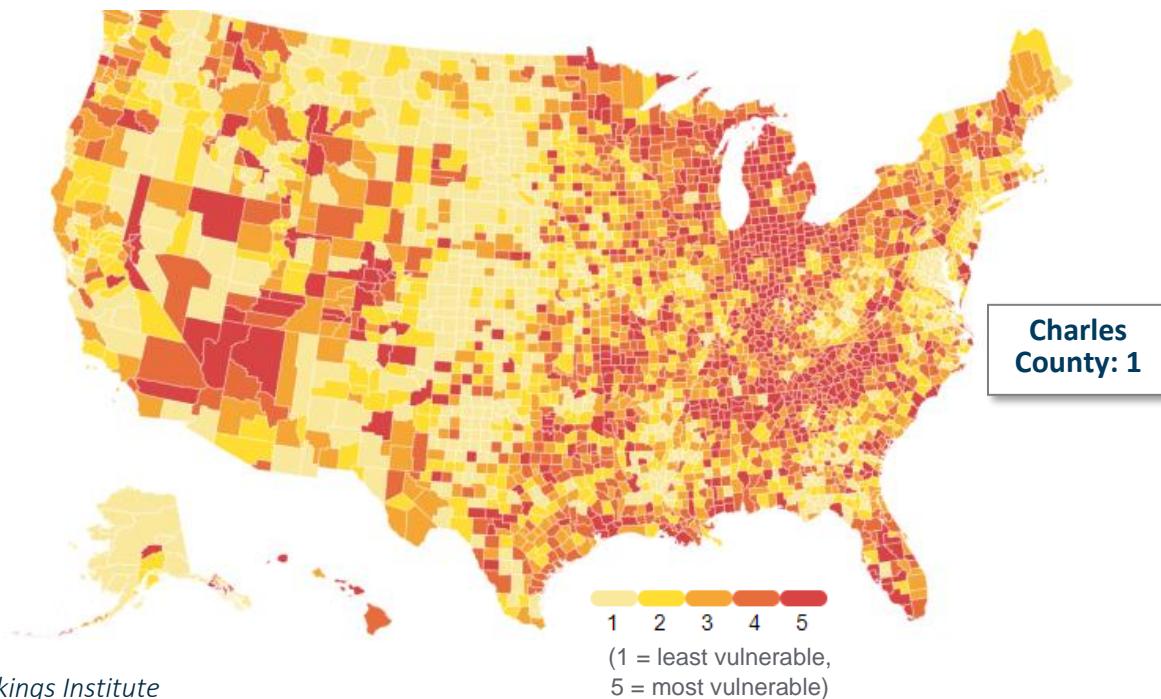
¹ <http://www.chmuraecon.com/interactive/covid-19-economic-vulnerability-index>

Deloitte Insights

Deloitte Insights also created an Economic Vulnerability Index² to show the relative susceptibility of each county's employment base as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Scores range from 1 to 5: the higher the score, the more likely employees within the county are vulnerable to the pandemic. This index was based on a survey of Deloitte's US Research and Insights organization consisting of industry specialists studying the impact of COVID-19 on their respective industries. The share of a county's employment in each industry was multiplied by the vulnerability as determined by the survey.

Charles County's score of 1 shows that its residents are employed by less vulnerable industries. This completely contradicts the rating above from Chmura. This is likely due to the indices using different data sets – Chmura's index looks at the employment base of those *employed* in the county (regardless of where they live) while the Deloitte EVI is based on the industries that employ those who *live* in the county (regardless of where they work) as reported by the US Census Bureau. Charles County's high level of out-commuter population will be viewed differently in each index ranking. It is important to note that these indices are indicators and the focus of the EDD is on job creation and retaining employment within Charles County.

Figure 2.2 Deloitte Economic Vulnerability Index Map



Brookings Institute

The Brookings Institute, a Washington D.C. research organization, weighed in on the pandemic's effect as well in the article *The places a COVID-19 recession will likely hit hardest*³. The group used the "most at risk" industry groups identified by Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's, to map those industries across the metro areas of the country. The five most susceptible sectors include mining/oil and gas, transportation, employment services, travel arrangements, and leisure and hospitality. The Washington DC Metro area's employment share in these COVID-19 high risk sectors is 13.3% of the metro's total employment. Comparatively, the Washington DC Metro area ranking 315 out of 382 metros, showing the relatively low risk. Midland, TX ranked first, and therefore the most at risk in this measure, due to the high percentage of gas and oil employment.

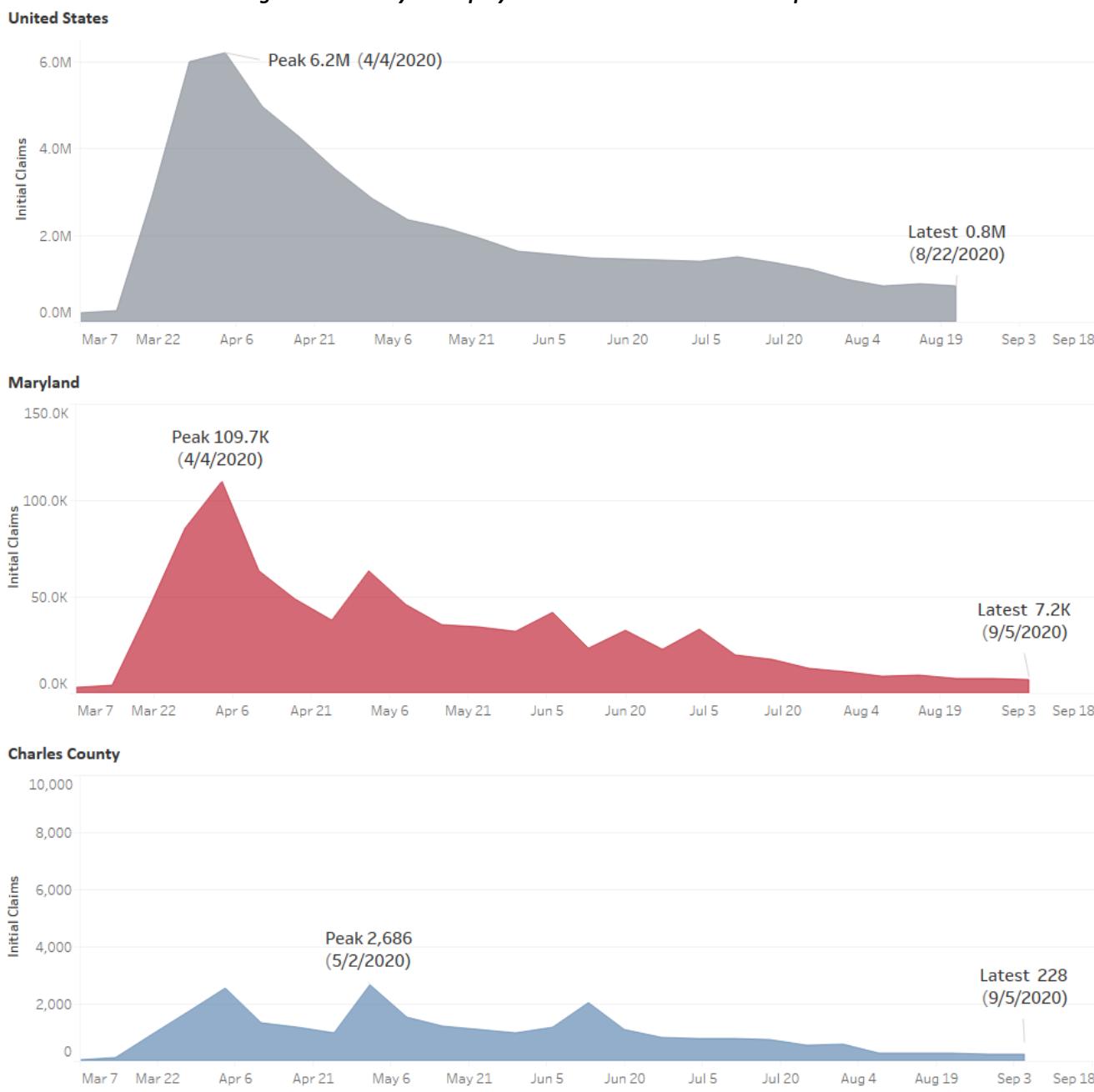
² <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/economy/local-economic-vulnerability-index-covid-19-recession-interactive-data.html>

³ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2020/03/17/the-places-a-covid-19-recession-will-likely-hit-hardest/>

Unemployment Insurance Claims

One of the first measures that showed the impact of COVID-19 is the Unemployment Insurance weekly claims data. In mid-March, unemployment claims as a result of pandemic related closures and furloughs began to pour in soaring to a peak of 6.2 million nationally by the week of March 29th. Maryland had 109,700 claims in the same week, and Charles County reached 2,500 claims. However, the number of Charles County unemployment insurance claims peaked the week of May 2nd, the first week that Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims were recorded.

Figure 2.3 Weekly Unemployment Insurance Claims Mar -Sep 2020



Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Maryland Department of Labor.

Note: UI Counts are Not Seasonally Adjusted, Charles County data includes all UI programs including the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), and Extended Benefits (EB)

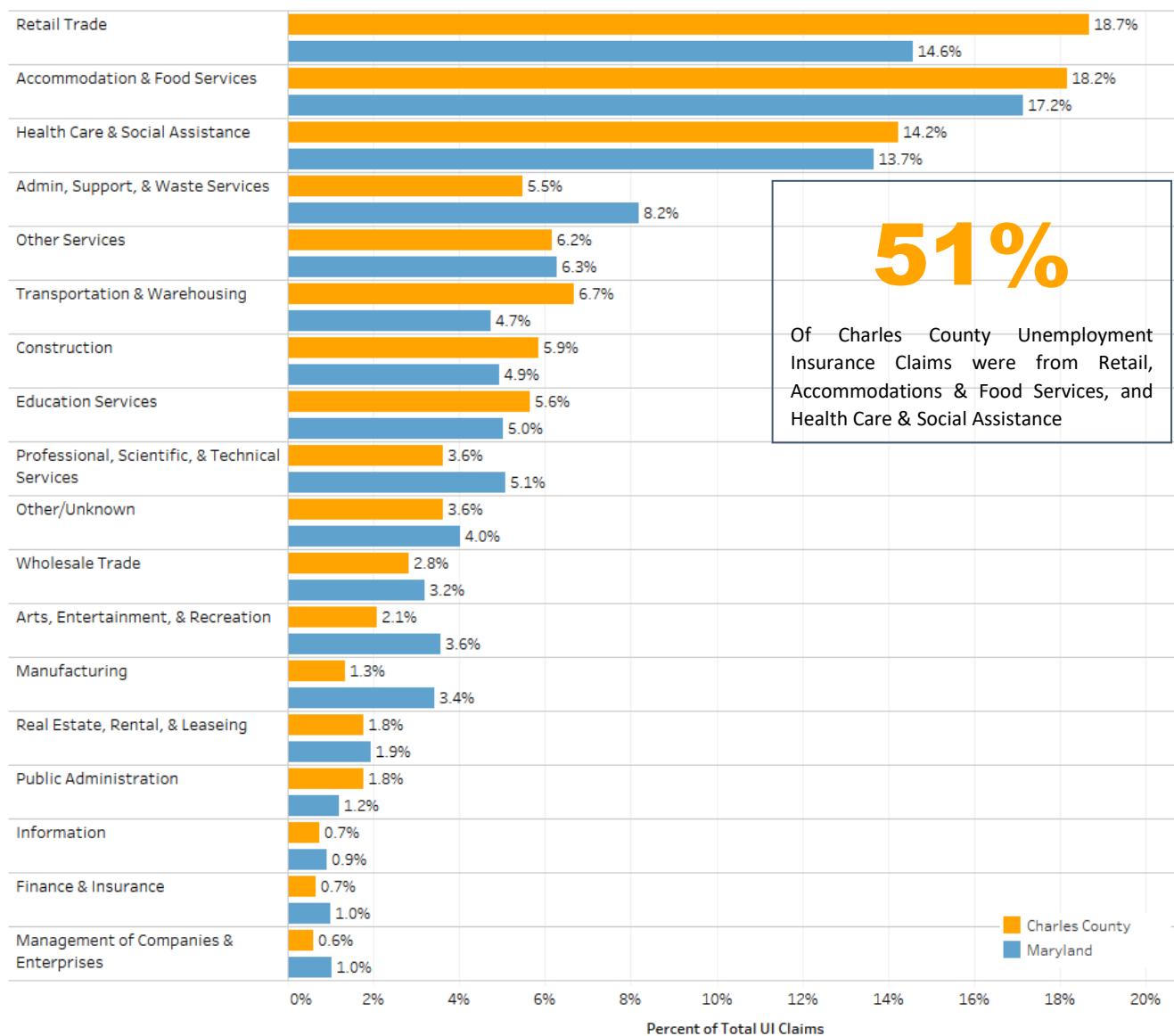


Unemployment Insurance Claims

By Industry

Not surprisingly, the industries with the highest number of unemployment insurance claims are under the *Retail Trade* and *Accommodation & Food Services* for both Charles County and Maryland as a whole. Third on the list for both local and state UI claims is *Health Care & Social Assistance* which contains the subcategory of *Child Day Care Services*. Childcare is included in many vulnerable industry models as being likely to experience employment disruptions. These three industry categories represent the majority (51%) of unemployment insurance claims in Charles County. Overall, Charles County had nearly 13,500 regular claims during this period from March through September 12th. Figure 2.4 below illustrates all industries with reported claims for both Charles County and the State of Maryland.

Figure 2.4 Unemployment Insurance Claims by Industry
Charles County & Maryland, Mar – Sep 2020

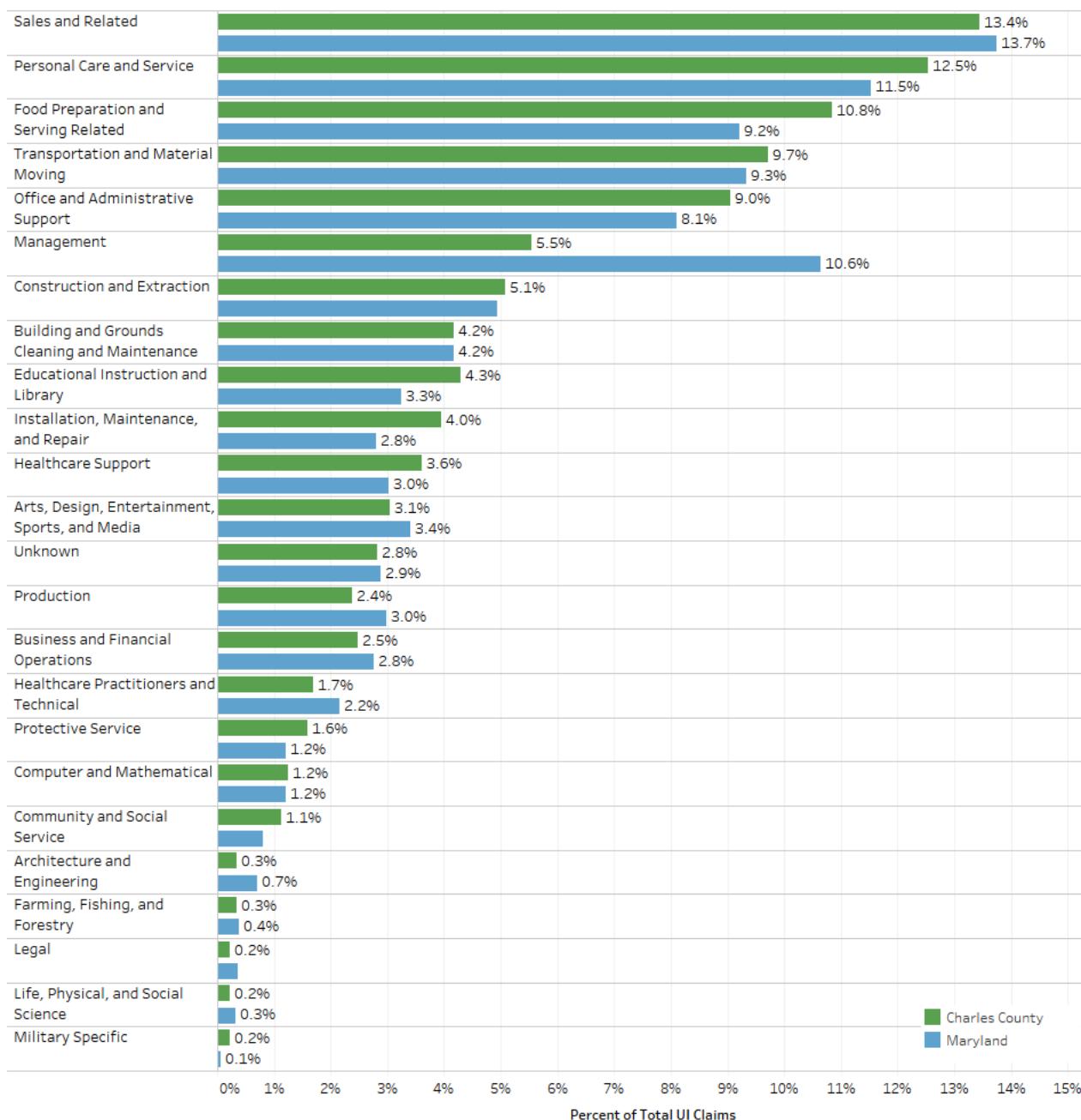


Sources: Maryland Department of Labor, Regular Unemployment Insurance Claims between 3-12020 and 9-12-2020

By Occupation

A limited number of unemployment insurance claims filed between May and September 2020 could be analyzed to determine occupational categories. Unemployment insurance claims filed under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), and Extended Benefits (EB) supplemental programs reached 8,850 in September. The most common occupations reported in Charles County were *Sales and Related* (13.4% of claims), *Personal Care and Service* (12.5%), *Food Preparation and Serving* (10.8%), *Transportation and Material Moving* (9.7%), and *Office and Administrative Support* (9%). These five occupational groups comprise 55% of the total number of claims filed under these programs.

Figure 2.5 Pandemic Programs Unemployment Insurance Claims by Occupation
Charles County & Maryland, May – Sep 2020



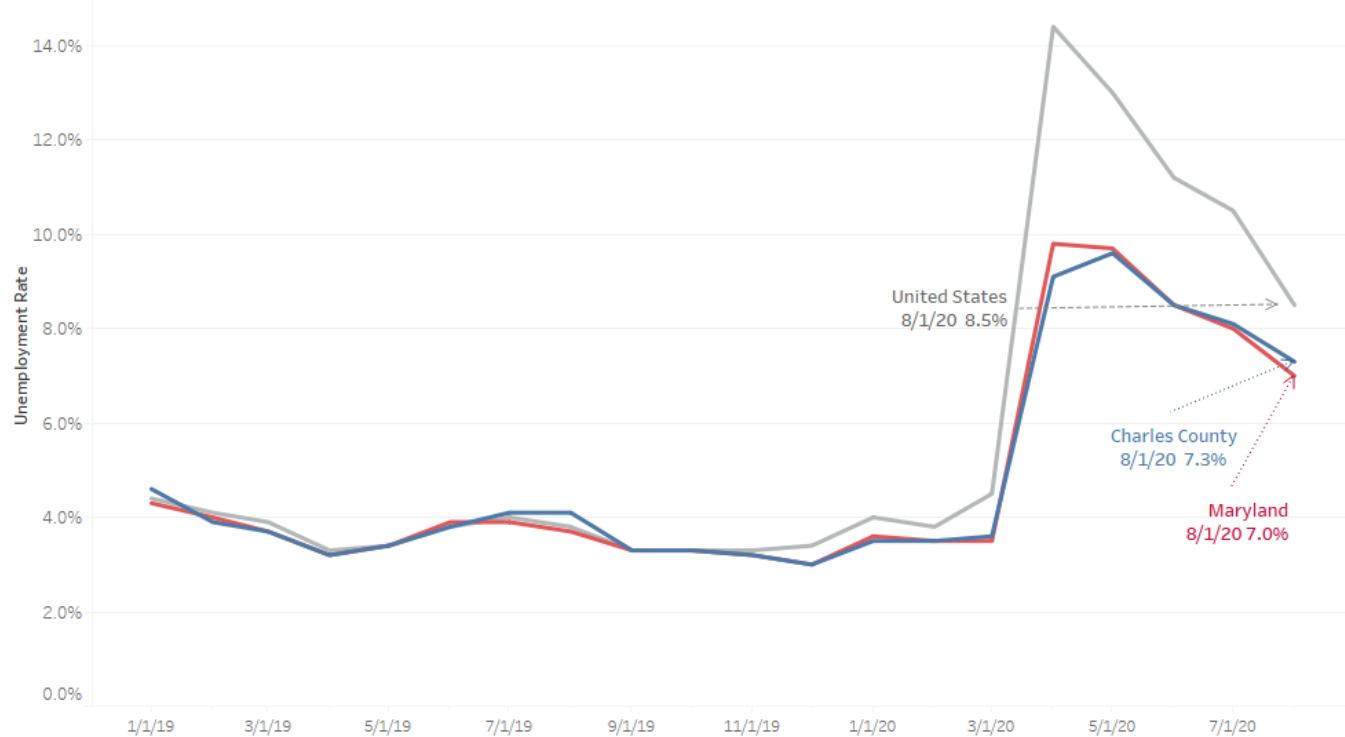
Sources: Maryland Department of Labor, Regular Unemployment Insurance Claims between 3-12020 and 9-12-2020

Occupations that fall under these five categories have many face-to-face, public serving, or travel related functions. With retail and restaurant operations curbed significantly, salespersons, food servers, beauticians, and other personal care providers were unemployed. With people sheltering in place and avoiding mass transit or any travel plans, the transportation industry has seen decreases as well. Additionally, with many working from home, administrative support positions were not as essential to vacant offices. Figure 2.6 outlines all occupational categories which realized any unemployment insurance claims under any of the supplemental pandemic programs.

Unemployment

While Unemployment Insurance claims were a leading indicator, the unemployment patterns show a steep increase followed by an immediate decline in new claims. Nationally, the unemployment rate reached 14.4% in April 2020. Neither Charles County nor Maryland broke the 10% mark for unemployment rates. The rate in Maryland reached 9.8% in April while Charles County's highest level was 9.6% in May 2020. All rates fell by June 2020 and the latest unemployment rates were 8.5%, 7% and 7.3% for the nation, Maryland, and Charles County respectively.

Figure 2.6 Unemployment Rates, 2019-2020



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

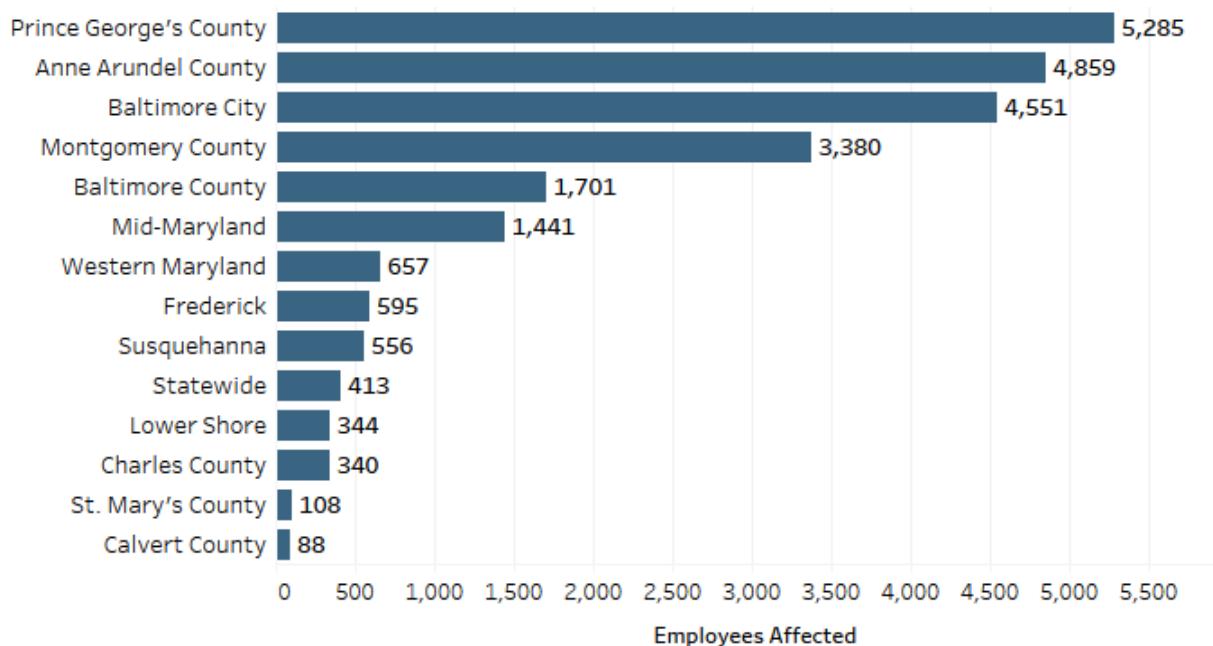
Mass Layoffs

Unemployment rates and unemployment insurance rates rose significantly for Charles County as the COVID-19 pandemic affected business operations. Although these numbers were high, most layoffs were not reported via the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN). Companies employing 100 or more laying off or closing operations of 50 people or more are generally required to file WARN notices and inform employees at

least 60 days prior to job losses taking effect. The current pandemic situation led many to “furlough” or reduce hours which may not be reported. Depending on the employer’s size, type of action, and the duration, many situations have flown “under the radar” of mass layoff reporting.

Of those companies that did report mass layoffs or closings in Charles County between March and September 2020, all were retail or restaurant establishments (Table 2.2). The County had 340 employees affected by reported layoffs, relatively few compared to the other Workforce Investment Area districts (Figure 2.7). Charles County ranks second to last in Maryland for layoffs reported via the WARN Act in 2020, which is a positive.

Figure 2.7 Employees Affected by Layoffs reported via WARN Act in Maryland, Mar-Sep 2020



Source: Maryland Dept. of Labor, Work Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) log for 2020

Table 2.2 Layoffs reported via WARN Act in Charles County, Mar-Sep 2020

Notice Date	NAICS	Industry	Company/Establishment	Location	Employees	Type
4/6/2020	448310	Jewelry Stores	Pandora	Waldorf	10	Layoff
4/8/2020	448120	Clothing Store	New York & Company	Waldorf	17	Layoff
4/12/2020	452210	Department Stores	Sears Department Store	Waldorf	58	Closure
4/12/2020	811111	Automotive Repair	Sears Auto Center	Waldorf	10	Closure
4/23/2020	446130	Optical Goods Store	Visionworks	Waldorf	14	Layoff
4/27/2020	722511	Restaurants	Carrabba's	Waldorf	65	Layoff
5/15/2020	722511	Restaurants	Hooters	Waldorf	17	Layoff
4/27/2021	722511	Restaurants	Outback Steakhouse	Waldorf	84	Layoff
4/27/2022	722511	Restaurants	Outback Steakhouse	La Plata	65	Layoff

Source: Maryland Dept. of Labor, Work Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) log for 2020



Vulnerable Industry Sectors

The data presented thus far in Chapter 2 lead to a definite pattern of susceptible industries that have already experienced challenges. A list of vulnerable industry sectors was created for this report from several existing economic vulnerability models and research on pandemic business activity, including Chmura Economics, Brookings Institute, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis⁴. Using detailed business codes, this list includes businesses engaged in retail, restaurant, personal services, and travel. With this applied to Charles County, approximately 23% of the County's employment is at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 2.8). This is comparable to the national level of 20% employment at risk (Figure 2.9).

Figure 2.8 Charles County COVID-19 Vulnerable Industry Employment

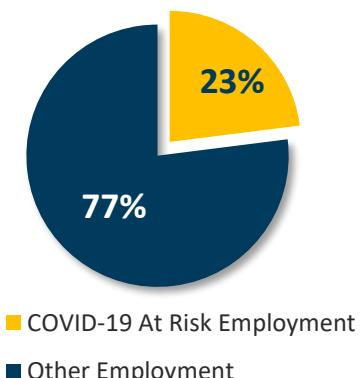
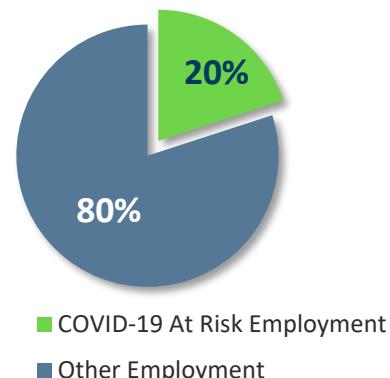
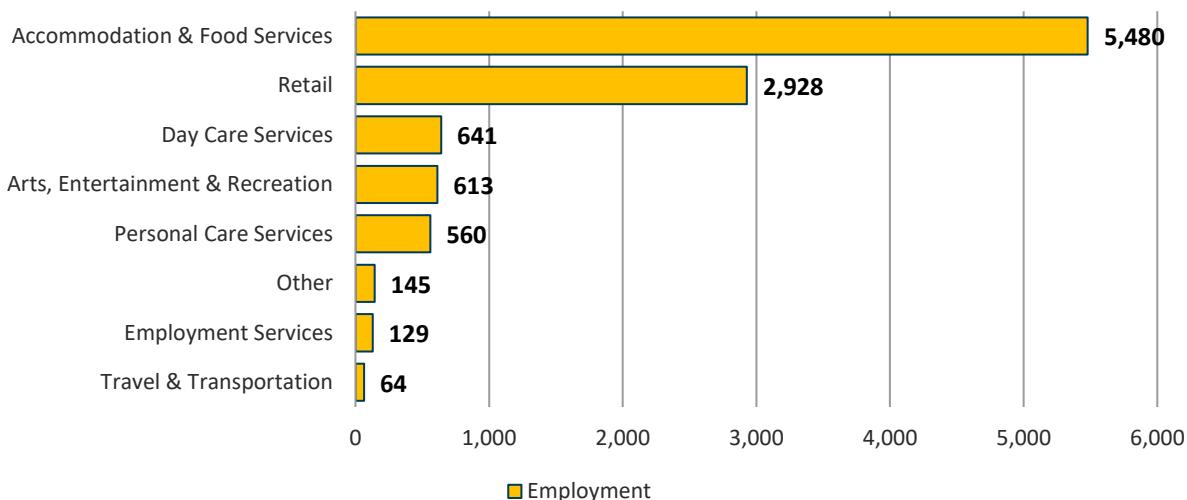


Figure 2.9 United States Vulnerable Industry Employment



Source: JobsEQ, 2020 Employment

Figure 2.10 Charles County COVID-19 Vulnerable Industry Employment by Industry



Source: JobsEQ, 2020 Employment

⁴ BEA https://www.bea.gov/system/files/papers/BEA-WP2020-5_0.pdf

Table 2.3 Charles County COVID-19 Vulnerable Industry Employment by Industry

NAICS	Industry	Employment 2020	Category Employment
ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES			5,480
<i>Selected categories include:</i>			
	Hotels and Motels	246	
	Special Food Services (Caterers, Food Trucks, etc.)	214	
	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)	55	
	Full-Service Restaurants	2,403	
	Limited-Service Restaurants	2,268	
	Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars	257	
RETAIL CATEGORIES			2,929
<i>Selected categories include:</i>			
	Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	264	
	Gasoline Stations	196	
	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	762	
	Book Stores and News Dealers	23	
	Department Stores	1,365	
	Office Supplies, Stationery, and Gift Stores	100	
	Used Merchandise Stores	21	
	Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	197	
CHILD DAY CARE SERVICES			641
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, AND RECREATION			613
<i>Selected categories include:</i>			
	Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries	220	
	Amusement Parks and Arcades	22	
	Golf Courses and Country Clubs	40	
	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers	200	
PERSONAL CARE SERVICES			560
<i>Selected categories include:</i>			
	Barber Shops	36	
	Beauty Salons	283	
	Nail Salons	124	
OTHER			145
<i>Selected categories include:</i>			
	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	6	
	Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries	47	
	Rental and Leasing Services	92	
	Automotive Equipment Rental and Leasing	21	
	Consumer Goods Rental	40	
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES			129
TRAVEL/TRANSPORTATION			64
<i>Selected categories include:</i>			
	Urban Transit Systems	24	
	Travel Arrangement and Reservation Services	39	
	Consumer Goods Rental	40	
TOTAL OF ALL AT-RISK INDUSTRIES			10,564

Source: Jobs EQ. NAICS Codes of all sectors included in this COVID-19 At-Risk model include: 71, 72, 8121, 6244, 5615, 5613, 532, 512, 487, 4851, 442, 447, 448, 4512, 4522, 4532, 4533, 4539, and 21.

Vulnerable Occupations

Applying a staffing pattern to the vulnerable industry sectors modeled in Table 2.3 results in related occupations employed in those industries that may experience job losses. The top 25 occupations employing the most people as of the first quarter of 2020 are centered around retail, food serving, and personal service workers.

Table 2.3 Charles County COVID-19 Vulnerable Industry Employment by Industry

Occupation	2020 Employment	Avg Ann Wages	2020 Q1 Unemployment	2020 Q1 Unemployment Rate	Online Job Ads	2-Year Forecast Baseline	COVID Model
Retail Salespersons	2,103	\$26,900	110	4.6%	279	-21	-46
Cashiers	1,814	\$23,100	166	6.9%	19	-25	-42
Fast Food and Counter Workers	1,625	\$23,300	147	6.5%	104	38	-24
Laborers and Material Movers	1,481	\$27,200	158	6.5%	146	-14	-21
Waiters and Waitresses	998	\$26,400	66	4.6%	36	7	-34
Supervisors of Sales Workers	914	\$50,800	21	1.8%	148	-10	-17
Building Cleaning Workers	879	\$26,600	83	4.6%	46	4	-6
Cooks	832	\$26,100	71	6.2%	49	11	-21
Driver/Sales Workers and Truck Drivers	801	\$37,800	44	2.9%	99	-1	-12
General and Operations Managers	650	\$126,000	22	1.8%	14	4	-5
Teaching Assistants	599	\$30,600	33	3.6%	7	5	2
Customer Service Representatives	551	\$36,200	45	4.0%	34	-9	-14
Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	479	\$37,100	19	2.4%	142	8	-11
Barbers, Hairdressers, Hairstylists and Cosmetologists	413	\$34,700	15	2.1%	13	4	-11
Childcare Workers	408	\$25,200	26	4.4%	29	2	-3
Food Preparation Workers	357	\$24,000	30	6.4%	37	4	-6
Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers	301	\$39,400	10	2.9%	27	3	0
Recreation and Fitness Workers	276	\$33,100	16	4.5%	6	4	-3
Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers	212	\$24,600	22	7.1%	7	3	-5
Dishwashers	202	\$22,900	26	10.8%	17	0	-8
Bartenders	178	\$30,400	13	2.9%	15	2	-4
Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	172	\$23,300	17	4.9%	16	3	-4
Food Service Managers	152	\$62,800	5	1.9%	17	2	-4
Miscellaneous Personal Appearance Workers	125	\$25,700	2	1.9%	1	2	-3
Miscellaneous Entertainment Attendants and Related Workers	98	\$24,100	21	7.8%	n/a	1	-2
Top 25 Occupations for COVID-19 Risk Industries in CC	16,620	\$33,200	1,188	4.7%	1,311	23	-308
Total/Average	46,221	\$45,365*	2,966	3.5%	3,173	147	-505

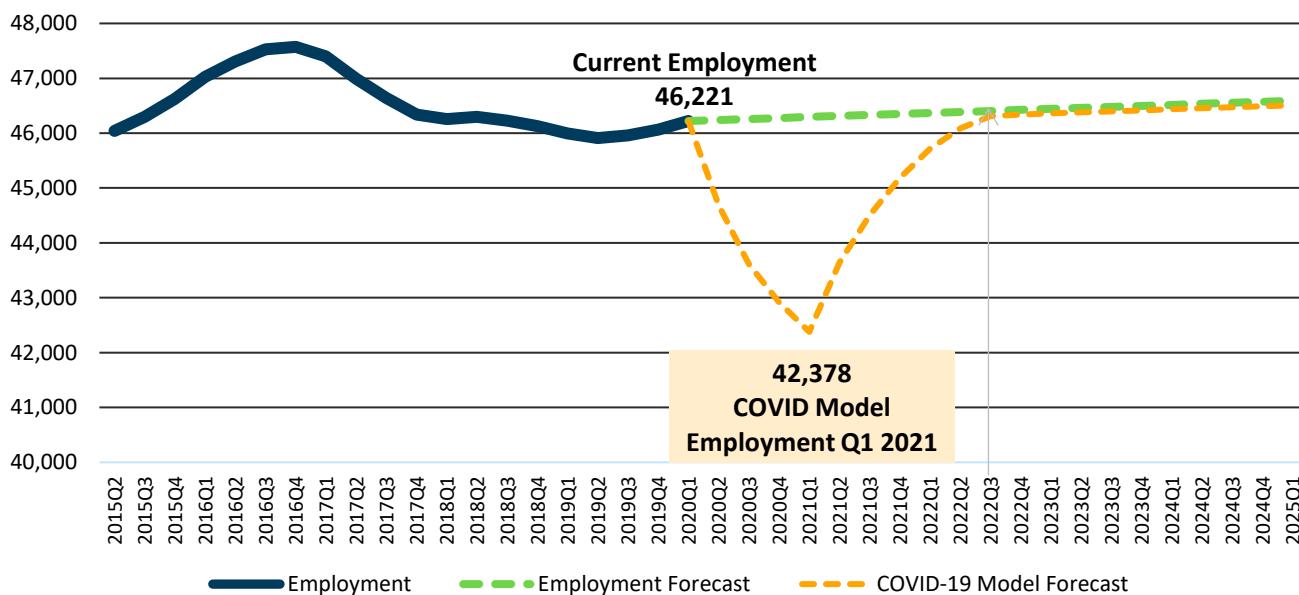
Source: Jobs EQ. Data based on a four-quarter moving average. Wage data are as of 2019 for Covered Employment. Online Job Ads represent a sampling of ads found online within the last thirty days for Charles County. The Chmura COVID Forecast model takes into consideration the existing pandemic and its effects on job demands creating a model for estimating future growth. *Annual Average Salary for all industries.

All but three of the occupations listed earn less than the Charles County Average Wage of \$45,365 according to JobsEQ data, which could make career retraining a good opportunity for many workers losing jobs. Approximately 16,600 workers are employed in these top 25 occupational groups with nearly 3,000 or 3.5% unemployed as of the first quarter of 2020. Taking into account COVID-19 patterns, a forecast model was utilized to estimate job change in this group of occupations. It is estimated that in two years, about 500 jobs will be lost in Charles County in these occupations alone. A normal forecast, without any employment event to consider, would see an increase of nearly 150 jobs. A sampling of current job listings online shows that there is still demand in most occupations listed. This is a leading indicator for general hiring activity and illustrates the need for talent, but does not specify industry, or whether ads are for replacing or adding workers.

Modeling Job Loss

The COVID-19 Model forecast by Chmura Economics takes into consideration the patterns of job losses experienced but not yet shown in workplace employment data. Figure 2.11 shows both a standard forecast and a COVID-19 forecast illustrating an expected dip in employment from the second quarter of 2020 through to a low point of 42,378 in the first quarter of 2021, then rising dramatically back to pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 2.11 Charles County Employment Forecasts: COVID-19 Model Effects



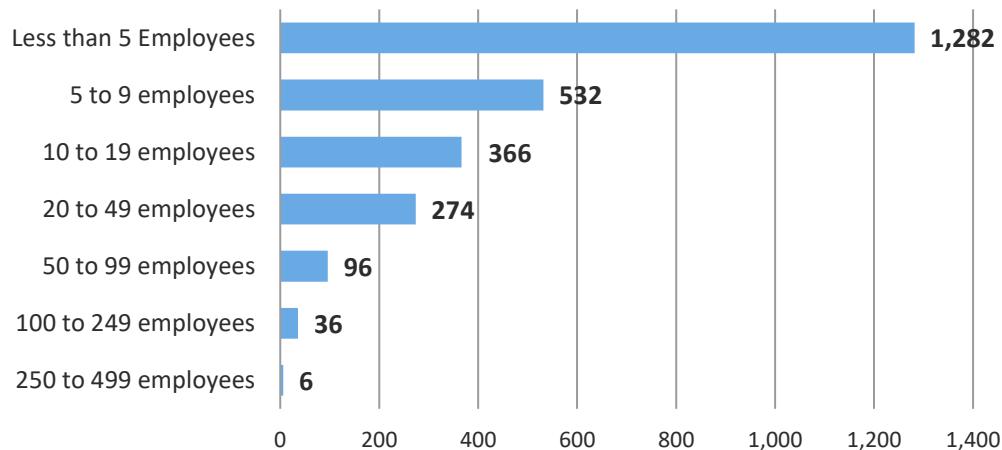
Employer Size & Age

Another tool to evaluate companies that may be exposed to risk is the size of establishments in Charles County. Of the more than 2,500 businesses in the County, 1,282 of them employ less than five (Figure 2.12). Overall, 70% of the County's establishments employ less than 10 people. McKinsey & Company stated that owners of the smallest firms are particularly vulnerable⁵. Analysis of previous recessions shows that small businesses accounted for the vast majority of permanent closures. Some small businesses may close or lay off employees due to the industry they are in, such as restaurant, catering, or personal services. Others may not have the capital to weather the pandemic effect on their business. It is estimated that just over 1,000 people were employed by new firms (one year or less since forming) in 2018 or about 2 percent of the total employment.⁶

⁵ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/americas/which-small-businesses-are-most-vulnerable-to-covid-19-and-when#>

⁶ QWI Explorer, private firms age 0-1 years for Charles County, 2018 Q4

Figure 2.12 Charles County Business Establishments by Employment Size, 2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2018

Summary

Research shows that Charles County businesses and workers are vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic, but according to several indices, not dramatically so. Proximity to Washington DC and being a part of the greater metro area also helps keep the mix of businesses and labor force resilient. Early indicators of unemployment insurance and unemployment show that the County experienced losses in the most common areas of *Retail* and *Accommodations and Food Service*. These trends were verified by calculating the vulnerability of industry sectors at risk of job loss. Approximately 23% of Charles County's employment is within sectors considered vulnerable compared to the national rate of 20%. The higher number of small firms employing under 20 (27%) and new firms which employ about 2% of total jobs. With all of this in consideration, the COVID-19 employment forecast model anticipates a sharp decline when the pandemic effects are actually seen in the data, with a predicted rebound to pre-pandemic levels by late 2022 (Figure 2.11). This is also predicated on state and local guidelines for businesses and activities reopening.

Chapter 3: From Adversity Comes Opportunity

Pivot initiatives for Charles County

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global economic disruption of enormous magnitude. Those states, regions, and communities that are able to adapt to a new “temporary” normal will benefit from softening this economic blow. We imply “temporary” because there will be some sense of returning to business as usual pre-pandemic after a widely accepted and used vaccination is developed. As the title implies, with adversity comes opportunity. Entrepreneurship typically flourishes in this environment. New products and processes are developed as a result of this disruption.

What continues to be in question is how long the pivot of working remotely will last, what happens to office space in the long term, and how is productivity and creativity impacted by these new normals? Many large office employers have told their employees that they should be prepared to work remotely through mid-2021, or in some cases permanently. Others are now telling their employees that the work remotely experience is only temporary. What many employers and employees are now saying is that the loss of a “creative collision” with their colleagues is having an impact on creativity, which in turns impacts productivity.⁷ Look for a return to work for many employees in an office environment by the third quarter of 2021. The workplace is not dead. It is simply evolving. How can Charles County benefit and help create a so-called silver lining of opportunity?

The EDD is again showing leadership when it comes to offering a plan to its policymakers on how best to weather the storm. With many of Charles County’s residents employed by the Federal government, the spending power of its many citizens is not in serious peril as it is with others who don’t have a federal job safety net of employment. However, many small businesses have been decimated by this pandemic, and Charles County is not immune to it. What can the County do to remain proactive in the larger picture of building a stronger diversified economic base?

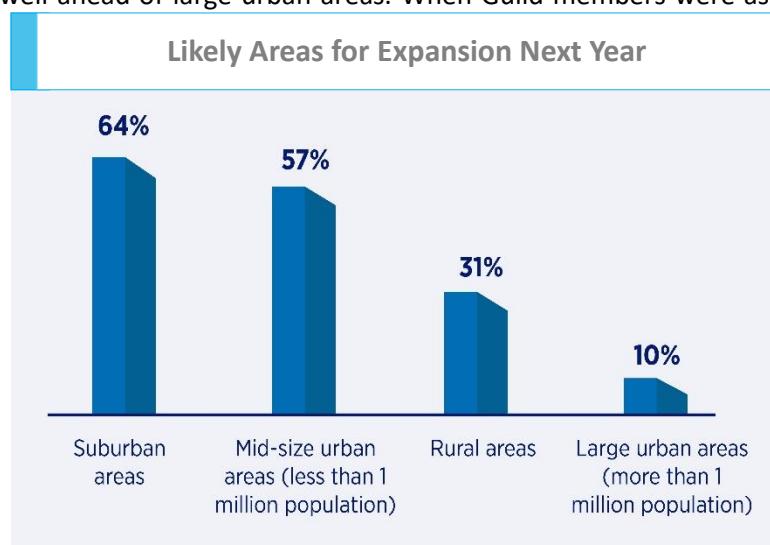
A New Geographic Advantage

The Site Selectors Guild, Inc. (SSG) is the only association of its kind representing global site location experts. Guild members advise and represent companies from all over the globe that are considering investment locations for new facilities, whether in manufacturing, distribution, data centers, office, etc. (Jay Garner currently serves as the chair of the board for the Guild.) SSG has undertaken surveys and research since the start of the pandemic, getting feedback from its corporate clients on business activities.

According to a survey on the impact of COVID-19, suburban areas and mid-size cities, followed by rural areas, will be the biggest winners of new corporate expansions and relocations, with large urban areas falling to the bottom of the list. Conducted the week of June 29, 2020 in partnership with Development Counsellors International (DCI), the online survey of Guild members aimed to uncover changes and new trends in corporate location strategy brought on by the COVID-19 crisis.

⁷ <https://www.foxrothschild.com/publications/why-the-commercial-office-will-survive-covid-19/>

The pandemic has brought suburban areas and mid-size cities into the forefront of consideration for future site selection projects and even put rural areas well ahead of large urban areas. When Guild members were asked about locations that are “likely” or “very likely” to be considered by corporations looking to expand, relocate, or open new facilities in the next 12 months, 64% chose suburban areas, 57% chose mid-size cities, 31% chose rural areas, and just 10% chose large urban areas. This puts Charles County in the enviable position of being geographically and population density strong, by offering both a suburban and rural environment, depending on what part of Charles County a potential investor is analyzing.



Source: Site Selectors Guild Survey, June 29, 2020

What sectors and initiatives offer the greatest opportunity for Charles County?

The supply chain will be significantly reshaped, especially in medical equipment and supplies, pharma, and consumer products. The pandemic will accelerate the regionalization of supply chains from abroad. This means that companies may have just had an Asian manufacturing presence and exported their products to the U.S. may now consider having an Asia plus one, which will in all likelihood be somewhere in North America. The current Made in America efforts to protect the supply chain has received rare, bipartisan Congressional support. Both business and the U.S. government see the challenges in protecting the global supply chain. The opportunity for EDO's and the reshoring of supplier-related companies to North America may be immense. This is especially true with suburban and rural communities like Charles County. Targeted industry sector additions are presented in Chapter 4 and include the following targets of short- and long-term opportunity for Charles County:

- Pharma manufacturing
- Medical supplies
- Medical equipment
- Food and beverage processing facilities (must have water and wastewater infrastructure)
- Large distribution and fulfillment centers
- Last mile distribution centers

Retail to Industrial Conversion (*No product, No Project™*)

No product, No project™. It's really as simple as that. You just can't sell from an empty wagon. If community leaders are serious about job creation and capital investment, then there needs to be “product” that can be marketed and ultimately sold or leased. Without product, a community will be overlooked or passed over by prospective companies for communities that DO have the type of product companies desire.

Because e-commerce has grown exponentially and will continue to do so, Charles County is a great example of why Amazon announced a recent fulfillment center⁸. As malls and large, single-purpose stores close, e.g. Sears, Kmart, JC Penney, etc., retail to industrial conversion is a significant tactic to repurpose outdated use and create new product for future investment options⁹.

Underperforming retail sites have become an ideal location for last-mile warehouse developers. They are often located within population centers (Charles County), connected to utilities, and have large parking lots with multiple points of ingress and egress. Many are also freestanding big-box stores with existing dock doors and clear heights compatible with industrial use. Those without compatible design formats are typically demolished and replaced with modern warehouse facilities. There are now 59 such projects across the country that have either been completed, proposed, or are underway which is up from 24 in January 2019, according to a CBRE Research survey. These projects total approximately 13.8 million sq. ft. of retail space converted to 15.5 million sq. ft. of industrial space. This number has increased because savvy developers and local government policymakers realize that the best utilization of vacant property may require a significant pivot in changing regulatory policy. The culture of “yes”, noted in our previous plans for Charles County means policymakers need to be adaptive and flexible based on changes to global or local economic conditions.

⁸ <http://lagassereport.com/2020/07/11/amazon-picks-charles-county-for-new-local-delivery-warehouse/>

⁹ <https://icpllc.com/projects/randall-park-mall-north-randall-ohio/>

Chapter 4: Target Additions for Charles County

Figure 4.1 Pivot Plan Target Additions

Pharmaceutical, Medical Supplies & Medical Device Mfg.	Food & Beverage Processing	Logistics & Distribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmaceutical Mfg. • Medical Supplies • Medical Device Mfg. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasoning & Dressing Mfg. • Snack Food Mfg. • Specialty Food & Flavoring Mfg. • Frozen Food Mfg. • Bakeries & Tortilla Mfg. • Animal Food Mfg. • Grocery Wholesalers • Refrigerated Warehousing & Storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Commerce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Large Fulfillment Centers ○ Last Mile Distribution • Distribution, Durable & Nondurable Goods • Trucking & Specialized Freight • Other Support Activities for Transportation • Packaging & Labeling Services



Based on drastic changes from the COVID-19 pandemic, new opportunities were evaluated and added to Charles County's Optimal Business Targets put forth in the Garner Economics **REFRESH AND RECALIBRATE** strategic plan completed in 2019. Keeping in mind the assets of the County, these targets aim to take advantage of the changing landscape and be able to pivot for promoting economic growth. New targets suggested are *Pharmaceutical, Medical Supplies & Medical Device Mfg.*; *Food Processing*; and *Logistics & Distribution*.

For reference, recommended targets for Charles County are: **Federal Contracting, Tech & Professional Services, Entrepreneurship & Experiential Retail, Value-added Agribusiness, and Health Services**.

For each targeted business sector, the community's competitive advantages are presented, along with national trends and projections of the targets. In some cases, target sectors are flat or actually losing jobs nationally, but the particular set of economic development assets in Charles County position it to capture any local or regional growing demand.



There is still uncertainty about the total impact of the pandemic with a vaccine still in development as this report is being written. But it is clear that we will see major changes in the economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the supply chain will be significantly reshaped particularly with medical equipment and supplies as well as pharmaceuticals. International demand will rise and accelerate the move to regionalize supply chains.

The year 2020 will be noted for its “Great Pivot” when many manufacturers shifted from normal operations and products to make much needed personal protection equipment (PPE) for healthcare professionals and the general populace. The need for these products will continue and so will the manufacturing and distribution. This opens the door to medical equipment makers expanding and firms finding a new product line as a result of the pandemic.

The notion of a pharma industry usually conjures up images of research and development activity. For this target, it is recommended that the manufacturing operations be the aim and not R&D. *Pharmaceutical Manufacturing* is akin to the *Food Processing* industry in many ways, including the skill sets and talent needed. Contract manufacturers make medicines in bulk for a variety of clients. The availability of ample water supply is a need for pharmaceutical manufacturing

Although pharma R&D is not part of this target, the health care assets in the region are a positive draw and the medical knowledge can be leveraged for various roles in this sector. The University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center in the county along with the hospital’s association with the University of Maryland is beneficial.

University of Maryland-College Park’s School of Public Health offers multiple degree programs and centers of research in Health Care that are also a great resource for this target in terms of talent supply. Overall, more than 9,500 degrees and certificates were awarded that can support jobs in pharmaceutical, medical devices, and medical supplies manufacturing.

Target rationales include:

- Centrally located for major regional & national markets
- Well positioned to serve international markets
- University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center location in Charles County
- Availability of technicians and scientists
- Availability of postsecondary vocational training
- Within 1 hour of major university/college
- Competitive cost of labor
- Historical national job growth of 17.1% for past decade
- National average wage \$99,992
- 9,549 degrees and certificates granted in majors related to target



**Table 4.1 Regional Degree Completions in Majors Related to
Pharmaceutical, Medical Supplies & Medical Device Mfg. Target, 2019**

Area of Study	Certificates	Associate	Bachelor's	Master's +	Total
Biological and Biomedical Sciences			635	65	700
Business, Management, Marketing & Related	124	454	1295	1091	2,964
Communication, Journalism & Related	0	1	420	33	454
Computer & Information Sciences	62	156	1069	251	1,538
Engineering		66	1032	795	1,893
Engineering Technologies	10	15	1		26
Health Professions & Related	372	321	440	248	1,381
Mathematics & Statistics	0		175	125	300
Mechanic & Repair Technologies/Technicians	74	0			74
Physical Sciences			137	82	219
Total	642	1,013	5,204	2,690	9,549

Source: National Center for Education Statistics. Graduates from the following schools are included: University of Maryland-College Park, Prince George's Community College, College of Southern Maryland, Strayer University-Maryland, Gallaudet University, Fortis College-Landover, DeVry University-Virginia, Divine Mercy University, CET-Alexandria, and Saint Michael College of Allied Health

**Table 4.2 Pharmaceutical, Medical Supplies & Medical Device Mfg. Target
Employment, Change and Wages, United States, 2019**

NAICS	Industry Description	2019 Jobs	10-Year Change	10-Year % Change	10-Year Forecast	10-Year % Forecast	Wages
423450	Medical, Dental, Hospital Equipment & Supplies Wholesalers	259,665	78,060	41.7%	-15,160	-5.8%	\$111,512
3391	Medical Equipment & Supplies Mfg.	330,824	26,420	8.6%	2,754	0.8%	\$76,724
3254	Pharmaceutical & Medicine Mfg.	309,416	28,218	10.0%	-745	-0.2%	\$115,202
Total/Weighted Average		899,905	132,697	17.1%	-13,151	-1.5%	\$99,992

Source: JobsEQ

Table 4.3 Key Occupations for Pharmaceutical, Medical Supplies & Medical Device Mfg. Target 45-Minute Drive Time from Charles County

SOC	Occupation	Typical on-the-job training	Typical education needed for entry	2020 Employment	Avg Ann Wages
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	None	Bachelor's degree	48,505	\$120,900
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	Short-term	No formal educational credential	44,355	\$32,500
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	Short-term	No formal educational credential	22,896	\$32,900
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	Moderate-term	High school diploma	19,149	\$50,300
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Short-term	Postsecondary nondegree award	12,476	\$50,900
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	None	Bachelor's degree	8,499	\$120,100
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	Short-term	High school diploma	5,429	\$40,000
53-7061	Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	Short-term	No formal educational credential	4,578	\$30,300
41-4011	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products	Moderate-term	Bachelor's degree	4,446	\$103,600
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	Moderate-term	High school diploma	4,395	\$39,200
43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	Moderate-term	High school diploma	3,979	\$56,600
29-1051	Pharmacists	None	Doctoral or professional degree	3,903	\$127,800
51-2092	Team Assemblers			3,711	\$36,700
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	None	High school diploma	3,107	\$71,600
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	Short-term	No formal educational credential	3,102	\$44,600
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	Moderate-term	High school diploma	2,830	\$54,500
29-2011	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists			2,744	\$62,200
51-2028	Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Except Coil Winders, Tapers, and Finishers	Moderate-term	High school diploma	1,904	\$49,500
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	Long-term	High school diploma	1,837	\$62,900
51-3092	Food Batchmakers	Moderate-term	High school diploma	705	\$36,700
49-9062	Medical Equipment Repairers	Moderate-term	Associate degree	584	\$62,200
51-4072	Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic	Moderate-term	High school diploma	394	\$34,900
51-9023	Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	Moderate-term	High school diploma	392	\$41,600
51-9081	Dental Laboratory Technicians	Moderate-term	High school diploma	252	\$53,400

Source: JobsEQ



TARGET: Food Processing

The *Food Processing* industry grew 14% over the past decade nationally. Continued growth is expected with several sectors growing faster than others. For instance, strong growth was experienced in *Seasoning & Dressing Manufacturing* (35%), *Snack Food Manufacturing* (29%), and *Animal Food Manufacturing* (24%).¹⁰

The *Food Processing* industry has been undergoing a shift, with consumers increasingly choosing healthy, fresh, organic, local, and ready-to-eat alternatives over traditional products that are mass-produced. *Food Processing* will tie in strongly with distribution systems — particularly the growing delivery business.

What is most astounding is the proliferation of online grocery sales during the pandemic. A recent CBRE industrial real estate report suggested that an additional 75 million to 100 million square feet of industrial freezer/cooler space will be needed to meet the demand generated by online grocery sales in the next five years. Demand for cold storage — not necessarily freezer — has been increasing even before the pandemic.

Cold storage facilities are an integral and necessary part of the *Food Processing* supply chain. These operations employed 65,000 people with over 1,400 businesses in the U.S. A “typical” new cold storage facility investment may have a capital outlay of over \$60 million and 50-75 jobs.

Charles County has ample farmland and agricultural products. This target pairs well with the County’s existing target of Value-Added Agribusiness seeking to continue leveraging natural assets in the County on a value-added level.

Target rationales include:

- Agricultural products in region
- Centrally located for national, and international markets
- Proximity to Washington and Baltimore markets
- University of Maryland Extension Center location in Charles County
- Availability of postsecondary vocational training
- Within 1 hour of major university/college(s)
- Competitive cost of labor
- Historical national job growth of 14% for past decade
- National average wage \$54,998
- 7,300 degrees and certificates granted in majors related to target



¹⁰ Source: JobsEQ national data, 2019

Table 4.4 Regional Degree Completions in Majors Related to Food Processing Target, 2019

Area of Study	Certificates	Associate	Bachelor's	Master's +	Total
Agriculture, Agriculture Operations & Related Sciences	8		202	38	248
Business, Management, Marketing & Related	124	454	1,295	1,091	2,964
Communication, Journalism & Related		1	420	33	454
Computer & Information Sciences & Support Services	62	156	1,069	251	1,538
Engineering		66	1,032	795	1,893
Engineering Technologies & Related	10	15	1		26
Family & Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences	4	6	143	5	158
Mechanic & Repair Technologies/Technicians	74	0			74
Personal & Culinary Services	4	8			12
Total	286	706	4,162	2,213	7,367

Source: National Center for Education Statistics. Graduates from the following schools are included: University of Maryland-College Park, Prince George's Community College, College of Southern Maryland, Strayer University-Maryland, Gallaudet University, Fortis College-Landover, DeVry University-Virginia, Divine Mercy University, CET-Alexandria, and Saint Michael College of Allied Health

Table 4.5 Food Processing Target Employment, Change and Wages, United States, 2019

NAICS	Industry Description	2019 Jobs	10-Year Change	10-Year % Change	10-Year Forecast	10-Year % Forecast	Wages
3111	Animal Food Mfg.	64,745	12,300	23.5%	2,654	4.1%	\$61,208
3113	Confectionery Product Mfg.	79,237	10,024	14.5%	-977	-1.2%	\$52,169
3117	Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging	37,305	-1,124	-2.9%	-4,370	-11.7%	\$50,361
3118	Bakeries & Tortilla Mfg.	327,888	42,053	14.7%	1,544	0.5%	\$39,412
31141	Frozen Food Mfg.	92,902	5,589	6.4%	-6,866	-7.4%	\$48,819
31191	Snack Food Mfg.	60,510	13,703	29.3%	3,133	5.2%	\$51,624
31193	Flavoring Syrup & Concentrate Mfg.	8,723	-1,165	-11.8%	455	5.2%	\$86,235
31194	Seasoning & Dressing Mfg.	45,612	11,858	35.1%	2,382	5.2%	\$63,887
4244	Grocery Wholesalers	799,116	79,947	11.1%	2,551	0.3%	\$61,706
49312	Refrigerated Warehousing	66,574	18,101	37.3%	9,662	14.5%	\$52,683
Total/Average		1,582,612	191,284	14.0%	10,169	1%	\$54,998

Source: JobsEQ

Table 4.6 Key Occupations for Food Processing Target, 45-Minute Drive Time from Charles County

SOC	Occupation	Typical on-the-job training	Typical education needed for entry	2020 Employment	Avg Ann Wages
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	Short-term	High school diploma	24,520	\$31,600
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	Moderate-term	No formal educational credential	20,429	\$32,200
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	Moderate-term	High school diploma	19,149	\$50,300
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	None	High school diploma	14,814	\$42,400
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	Short-term	No formal educational credential	12,679	\$28,800
13-1041	Compliance Officers	Moderate-term	Bachelor's degree	10,972	\$89,700
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	Short-term	No formal educational credential	7,588	\$26,900
49-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	None	High school diploma	6,838	\$76,900
43-5071	Shipping, Receiving, and Inventory Clerks	Short-term	High school diploma	5,429	\$40,000
35-2012	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	Short-term	No formal educational credential	4,640	\$36,200
43-5061	Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	Moderate-term	High school diploma	3,979	\$56,600
53-7064	Packers and Packagers, Hand	Short-term	No formal educational credential	3,332	\$31,800
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	None	High school diploma	3,107	\$71,600
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	Moderate-term	High school diploma	2,830	\$54,500
35-1011	Chefs and Head Cooks	None	High school diploma	2,478	\$63,300
51-3011	Bakers	Long-term	No formal educational credential	2,419	\$33,600
35-2015	Cooks, Short Order	Short-term	No formal educational credential	2,178	\$30,000
19-5011	Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	None	Bachelor's degree	1,912	\$86,900
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	Long-term	High school diploma	1,837	\$62,900
51-3021	Butchers and Meat Cutters	Long-term	No formal educational credential	1,386	\$41,600
51-9111	Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	Moderate-term	High school diploma	1,337	\$34,200
11-3051	Industrial Production Managers	None	Bachelor's degree	864	\$140,000
51-3092	Food Batchmakers	Moderate-term	High school diploma	705	\$36,700
43-5111	Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping	Short-term	High school diploma	486	\$40,800
51-9023	Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	Moderate-term	High school diploma	392	\$41,600

Source: JobsEQ



Whether companies master the “last-mile” distribution model or continue with a centralized, big-box template, demand certainly continues to rise for e-commerce. Colliers International expects supply chain resiliency efforts will lead to an **additional 750 million to a billion square feet** of industrial space in the United States alone. This move along with the ever-shortening delivery times is pushing the distribution sector to expand and innovate rapidly.

Earlier in this document, the Garner Economics mantra of “no product, no project™” was discussed in reference to converting retail property to industrial use. This target will depend on having real estate product readily available along with appropriate or flexible zoning in place to adapt for distribution needs.

One of this report’s recommendations is to leverage unused retail space for distribution. As big box stores close retail operations, industrial conversion is a significant tactic to repurpose property. Most larger stores have similar qualities to warehouse space with loading docks and ample parking.

Highway 301 provides a backbone to access Virginia and Maryland, connecting into I-495 and the key I-95 routes to the north and south. Highway 301 South will have the benefit of the new Nice-Middleton Bridge which will double vehicle capacity replacing the existing two-lane bridge with four lanes. The new bridge will have wider lanes and allows for easier distribution to the west and south. Charles County’s proximity to the Washington, DC, Baltimore, and Richmond markets make it a strong contender for distribution. With the recent announcements of an Amazon fulfillment center and the development of HQ2 to house more Amazon personnel, the area will become more and more attractive for e-commerce operations.

Packaging & Labeling Services is included in this target to address those companies that support e-commerce in their ability to package, bundle, and manage labeling processes. Charles County has an evolving printer cluster with more than a dozen commercial printers located here. Commercial printers can produce the needed labels, tags and other branded items for distribution along with bundling or packaging services.

Target rationales include:

- Proximity to Washington and Baltimore markets
- Local and regional traffic along U.S. Route 301
- Proximity to international airports
- Availability of postsecondary vocational training
- Within 1 hour of major university/college
- Opportunity to leverage presence of retired military, government, and contractor personnel
- Competitive cost of labor (P)
- Historical national job growth of 18.1% for past decade
- Forecasted national job growth of 2.6% for next decade
- National average wage \$67,807
- 7,223 degrees and certificates granted in majors related to target



Table 4.7 Regional Degree Completions in Majors Related to Logistics & Distribution Target, 2019

Area of Study	Certificates	Associate	Bachelor's	Master's +	Total
Business, Management, Marketing & Related	124	454	1,295	1,091	2,964
Communication, Journalism & Related	0	1	420	33	454
Computer & Information Sciences	62	156	1,069	251	1,538
Engineering		66	1,032	795	1,893
Mathematics & Statistics	0		175	125	300
Mechanic & Repair Technologies	74	0			74
Total	260	677	3,991	2,295	7,223

Source: National Center for Education Statistics. Graduates from the following schools are included: University of Maryland-College Park, Prince George's Community College, College of Southern Maryland, Strayer University-Maryland, Gallaudet University, Fortis College-Landover, DeVry University-Virginia, Divine Mercy University, CET-Alexandria, and Saint Michael College of Allied Health

Table 4.8 Logistics & Distribution Target Employment, Change and Wages, United States, 2019

NAICS	Industry Description	2020 Jobs	10-Year Change	10-Year % Change	10-Year Forecast	10-Year % Forecast	Wages
423	Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	3,265,028	444,994	15.8%	-97,628	-3.0%	\$80,528
424	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	2,209,232	202,469	10.1%	-54,343	-2.5%	\$72,837
42511	Business to Business Electronic Markets	34,252	-11,780	-25.6%	1,081	3.2%	\$90,905
42512	Wholesale Trade Agents and Brokers	514,265	-261,154	-33.7%	21,082	4.1%	\$98,792
4541	Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses	454,721	184,305	68.2%	173,620	38.2%	\$79,943
4543	Direct Selling Establishments	418,895	3,119	0.8%	-25,673	-6.1%	\$31,517
484	Truck Transportation	1,707,442	294,926	20.9%	57,800	3.4%	\$54,975
48851	Freight Transportation Arrangement	264,035	78,710	42.5%	11,473	4.3%	\$61,765
49311	General Warehousing and Storage	1,136,189	598,496	111.3%	165,025	14.5%	\$42,511
49319	Other Warehousing and Storage	52,622	8,526	19.3%	7,582	14.4%	\$54,875
541614	Process, Physical Distribution, and Logistics Consulting Services	146,593	45,523	45.0%	27,320	18.6%	\$75,821
561910	Packaging and Labeling Services	63,911	9,747	18.0%	1,211	1.9%	\$45,364
Logistics and Distribution		10,343,669	1,585,718	18.1%	272,311	2.6%	\$67,807

Source: JobsEQ

Table 4.9 Key High-Demand Occupations for Logistics & Distribution Target, 45-Minute Drive Time from Charles County

SOC	Occupation	Typical on-the-job training	Typical education needed for entry	2020 Employment	Avg Ann Wages
43-4051	Customer service representatives	Short-term	High school diploma	38,603	\$43,600
53-7065	Stockers and order fillers	Short-term	High school diploma	24,520	\$31,600
53-7062	Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	Short-term	No formal educational credential	22,896	\$32,900
53-3032	Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	Short-term	Postsecondary nondegree award	12,476	\$50,900
53-3033	Light truck drivers	Short-term	High school diploma	12,410	\$43,000
41-4012	Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing	Moderate-term	High school diploma	9,876	\$80,500
13-1081	Logisticians	None	Bachelor's degree	6,038	\$98,600
53-3031	Driver/sales workers	Short-term	High school diploma	5,540	\$32,400
43-5071	Shipping, receiving, and inventory clerks	Short-term	High school diploma	5,429	\$40,000
53-1047	Supervisors of transportation and material-moving workers	None	High school diploma	5,088	\$64,000
53-7061	Cleaners of vehicles and equipment	Short-term	No formal educational credential	4,578	\$30,300
43-5061	Production, planning, and expediting clerks	Moderate-term	High school diploma	3,979	\$56,600
53-7064	Packers and packagers, hand	Short-term	No formal educational credential	3,332	\$31,800
53-7051	Industrial truck and tractor operators	Short-term	No formal educational credential	3,102	\$44,600
43-5032	Dispatchers, except police, fire, and ambulance	Moderate-term	High school diploma	2,892	\$47,200
51-9061	Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	Moderate-term	High school diploma	2,830	\$54,500
49-3031	Bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists	Long-term	High school diploma	2,696	\$57,600
11-3071	Transportation, storage, and distribution managers	None	High school diploma	1,953	\$120,900
51-9111	Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders	Moderate-term	High school diploma	1,337	\$34,200
43-5011	Cargo and freight agents	Short-term	High school diploma	1,200	\$40,700
43-4151	Order clerks	Short-term	Some college, no degree	1,152	\$37,600
43-5111	Weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers, recordkeeping	Short-term	High school diploma	486	\$40,800
53-7063	Machine feeders and offbearers	Short-term	No formal educational credential	296	\$33,300
53-7199	Material moving workers, all other	Short-term	No formal educational credential	221	\$50,500

Source: JobsEQ

Chapter 5: In Closing

At the request of the Charles County Economic Development Department, Garner Economics prepared this report as an addendum to the **SHAPING THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF CHARLES COUNTY 2.0: REFRESH AND RECALIBRATE** of November 2019. Garner Economics would like to thank the Charles County EDD staff for their input, guidance, and leadership during this economically challenging environment.

For more information on this report, contact Garner Economics at info@garnereconomics.com.