

Business Resilience and Community Education (BRACE) for COVID-19: Helping Businesses Adopt Safer Practices During a Global Pandemic

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[Supplemental Video](#)

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Background: New Orleans, Louisiana is no stranger to disaster, yet nothing prepared this city for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit the community as swiftly and forcefully as a category 5 storm. In April 2020, businesses lacked trusted sources of information and direction on how to proceed in this unfamiliar and ever-changing landscape. Business Resilience and Community Education (BRACE) for COVID-19 was founded to prioritize the needs of the small business community to help them process the flood of information and misinformation disseminated throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. BRACE aimed to empower small businesses to implement safer business practices to protect employees, customers, and the New Orleans community. Design: The project progressed through 7 distinct phases: (1) Needs assessment within the New Orleans business community; (2) Creation of a business reopening guide; (3) Expansion of community partnerships; (4) In-person business canvassing; (5) In-person and virtual business consultation services; (6) Creation of BRACE pledge; (7) Continued COVID-19 education with a focus on vaccine information and access. Results/Impact: In our Phase 1 assessment, over 68% of respondents indicated that no organization had yet provided guidance on how to navigate the new restrictions. While over 84% of respondents noted that they had policies for employee use of personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer and indicated extra cleaning of high touch surfaces, only 50% provided hand sanitizer for customers and 40% were actively screening employees for illness. Almost 44% of respondents did not yet have a protocol in place for determining when an employee could return to work after illness. We have conducted 30 in-person and 20 virtual consultations to date, and 42 businesses have taken the BRACE pledge. The program has been endorsed by city and state health department officials for local business guidance. Conclusion: BRACE has worked directly with over 40 businesses and become a trusted resource to educate and empower businesses. Our consultations and BRACE pledge provide a malleable model to increase awareness, education, and safer COVID-19 practices across the entire business sector and can be expanded to reach communities across the state, nation, and around the globe.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this presentation, the audience will be able to implement a formulaic model to help small businesses in their community adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learning Objective 1

The audience will be able to better identify the needs of their community's small businesses and subsequently apply meaningful protocols for change.

Learning Objective 2

Medical students especially will be able to implement new strategies to help their community's small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learning Objective 3:

The audience will examine methods to engage with their community as healthcare leaders.

Figure 1: BRACE for COVID-19 Reopening Guide (front)

Figure 2: BRACE for COVID-19 Reopening Guide (back)



The flyer is titled "is your business BRACE'd for COVID-19?". It features a checklist of essential practices, a section for ideas from local neighbors, and contact information for Tulane Doctors. The design includes stylized virus icons and a clean, professional layout.

is your business
BRACE'd for
COVID-19?

essentials checklist:

- Employees wash hands regularly for 20 seconds
- Employees encouraged to wear masks
- Physical contact between employees and customers is minimized as much as possible
- Highly touched surfaces are sanitized frequently
- Established a clear return-to-work policy after illness

IDEAS FROM YOUR NOLA NEIGHBORS:

- Mark the ground with duct tape to indicate 6ft
- Post flyers or make intercom announcements to remind customers to maintain 6ft
- Place plexiglass at the register
- Make hand sanitizer available to employees and customers
- Encourage paying online to ensure contactless pickup
- Put large scale menus in the windows
- Encourage employees to check their temperatures before coming to work
 - Disinfect food shipments
- Tape door handles as a reminder of high touch surfaces
- Leave doors open whenever possible to minimize contact

WE CAN HELP!

Can you do more to prevent the spread of COVID-19? Do you have barriers that limit you from implementing these changes?

Please send an email to BRACEFORCOVID19@tulane.edu to schedule your FREE virtual or in-person evaluation of your business practices by medical students from Tulane University!

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Business Resilience And Community Education

BRACE FOR COVID-19

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS



Wash hands regularly.
Have hand sanitizer accessible to both employees and customers.



Encourage/require masks,
especially for employees with more customer interaction.



Keep customers 6 feet apart.
Tape the ground, limit customers inside, create one-way aisles, make use of outdoor space.



Sanitize high touch surfaces
regularly: doorknobs, faucets, countertops, keyboards.



Screen employees for illness
by asking about symptoms or checking temperatures. Develop a clear return-to-work policy.



Limit customer interaction.
Encourage ordering/payment over the phone. Install plexiglass between employees and customers.

Do you have barriers that limit you from implementing these changes to your current practices?
Please email us to schedule your FREE virtual or in-person evaluation of your business practices by medical students from Tulane University!

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