ePolicyWorks
Partners in Disability & Employment

Opening America's Workplaces Again
National Online Dialogue

April 30 – May 7, 2020
Final Summary Report

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Introduction

Background

On April 30, 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) hosted the *Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue* to solicit ideas about challenges that may be faced as businesses reopen and how best to help employers and workers reopen America's workplaces safely. USDOL hosted the dialogue as part of its continuing efforts to support American workers and position the economy for a strong rebound,

Eight agencies within USDOL collaborated to develop and support this important national discussion. The USDOL agencies involved included the Office of Compliance Initiatives (OCI); the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA); the Wage and Hour Division (WHD); the Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA); the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCCP); the Employment and Training Administration (ETA); the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP); Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS); and the Women's Bureau (WB). Members of each agency promoted the dialogue to their constituents and served as moderators by reviewing and responding to participant ideas and comments.

This national online dialogue provided an innovative opportunity for employers and business organizations, employees and employee groups, state and local government officials, and other stakeholders to play a key role in informing USDOL's efforts to ensure employers and workers, are able to participate fully in our economy.

During the 7-day national online dialogue, 1,775 stakeholder participants shared ideas on how to: (1) reopen businesses, (2) commute safely, (3) work safely, (4) reduce regulatory burden, (5) accommodate members of vulnerable populations, and (6) support America's families.

In conjunction with the dialogue, OCI, OSHA, WHD, EBSA, OFCCP, ETA, ODEP, VETS, and WB hosted the *Opening America's Workplaces Again* @ePolicyWorks Twitter chat. The @ePolicyWorks Twitter chat focused on the challenges that employers and workers may face as businesses reopen and how USDOL can best help employers and workers reopen America's workplaces safely. The chat featured guests from the American Nursing Association (ANA); the DirectEmployers Association (DE); Mental Health America (MHA); and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

Moving forward, USDOL will use the results of the online dialogue and the Twitter chat to inform its efforts to support America's employers and workers as reopen America's workplaces.

Online Dialogue Topics

The *Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue* contained six different campaigns by topic area.

1. **Reopening Businesses**
   Under this campaign, USDOL asked dialogue participants to submit ideas and comments about what employers and workers can do to reopen America's workplaces safely.

2. **Commuting Safely**
   Under this campaign, USDOL asked stakeholders to share ideas about what employers and workers can do to keep commuters safe.

3. **Working Safely**
   Under this campaign, USDOL asked dialogue participants to share ideas about what employers and workers can do to keep customers and workers safe.

4. **Accommodating Members of Vulnerable Populations**
   Under this campaign, USDOL asked all participants to weigh in on what employers and workers can do to accommodate members of vulnerable populations

5. **Supporting America's Families**
   Under this campaign, USDOL asked stakeholders what employers can do to provide workers with the flexibility they need to balance work and family caregiving responsibilities.

6. **Reducing Regulatory Burdens**
   Under this campaign, USDOL looked to dialogue participants for ideas about ways USDOL can reduce regulatory burdens in order to more quickly open America's workplaces safely, keep them open, and allow them to thrive.

Outreach Efforts

The *Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue* asked employers, workers, state and local government officials, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders to share their ideas and take part in the important discussion around opening America's workplaces. In order to ensure a wide range of participants, ePolicyWorks conducted numerous strategic outreach efforts, including distributing targeted eblasts and social media posts and hosting a Twitter chat. ePolicyWorks sent eblasts to the registrants of the previous *Providing Expanded Family and Medical Leave to Employees Affected by COVID-19 National Online Dialogue* in addition to others in the ePolicyWorks community, as well as organizations that represent employers and workers, state and local government officials, and other key stakeholders, including members of the disability community. Members of each agency promoted the dialogue to their constituents by email and social media outreach at the launch of the dialogue and throughout the campaign.

Total ePolicyWorks Outreach

- Email Campaigns: 5 (dialogue launch, Twitter Chat promo, return to the dialogue, last chance, last day)
- Emails Delivered: 40,199
- Emails Opened: 8,989
- Total number of clicks on links in emails (excluding multiple clicks of the same link): 1,092
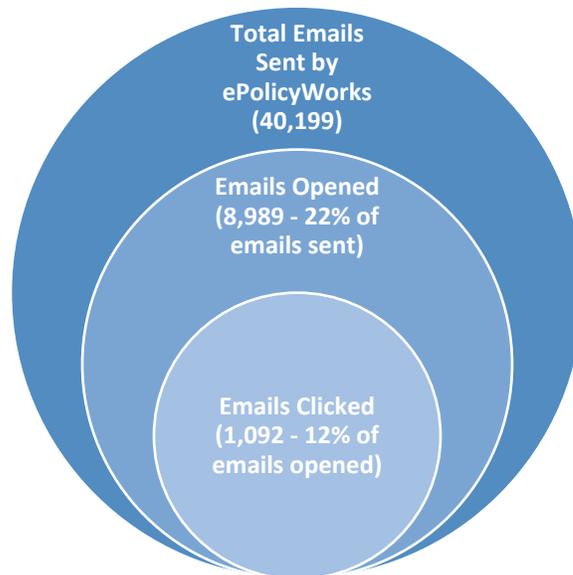
- Number of @ePolicyWorks impressions of online dialogue promotions: 71,313 (from 8 online dialogue promotion tweets)

- Of the 17,878 visits to the dialogue, 802 visits, or approximately 4.5% of the total traffic to the online dialogue, came from social media.

- Distribution of source of social media traffic to the online dialogue:
  - Facebook: 71%
  - Twitter: 20%
  - LinkedIn: 9%

SOCIAL MEDIA TRAFFIC TO THE DIALOGUE

LinkedIn, 9%

Twitter, 20%
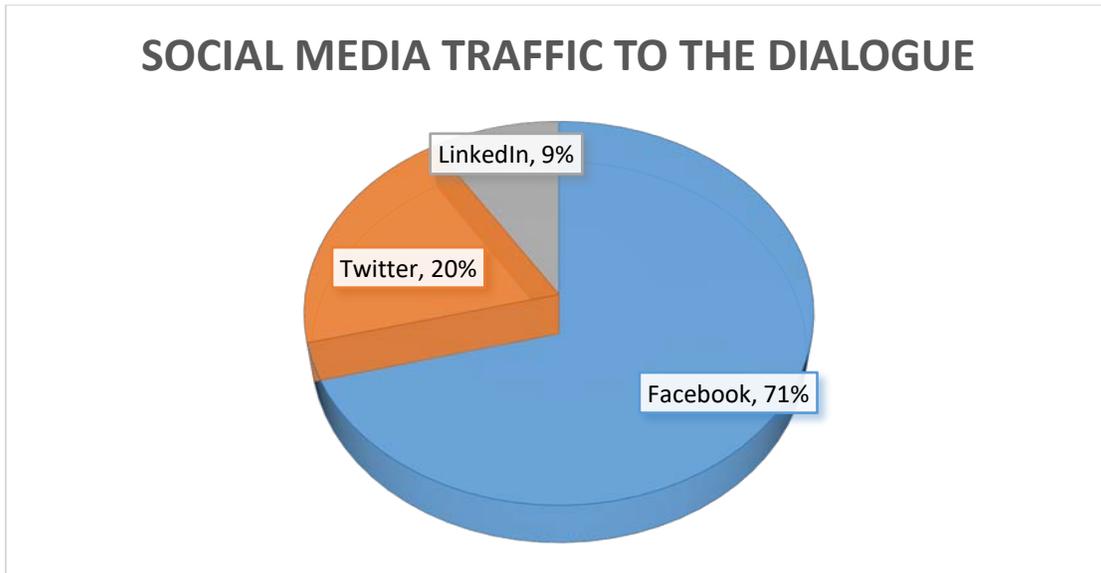
Facebook, 71%

Independent Online Dialogue and Twitter Chat Promotion

Over the course of the online dialogue, many organizations promoted the online dialogue and Twitter chat through Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, emails, blogs, newsletters, and action alerts. Below is a sampling of the organizations that published details regarding the online events:

- American Association of Cosmetology Schools
- Associated Builders and Contractors
- The Automotive Service Association
- National Concrete Masonry Association
- National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
- National Safety Council
- New Jersey State Industrial Safety Committee
- American Nurses Association
- Promotional Products Association

- Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association
- The Specialized Carriers and Rigging Association
- Transportation Intermediaries Association
- The Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association, Inc
- Women's Business Development Center
- Women's Business Enterprise Council Pacific

Twitter Chat on Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue

Twitter Chat Overview

On May 1, 2020, the USDOL's OCI, in partnership with ODEP, OSHA, WHD, OFCCP, EBSA, ETA, VETS, and WB, hosted an @ePolicyWorks Twitter Chat about challenges that may be faced as businesses reopen and how USDOL can best help employers and workers reopen America's workplaces safely. The chat featured guests from the ANA; DE; MHA; and SHRM.

For one hour, participants took part in a real-time, interactive discussion on keeping employers and workers safe as businesses reopen, making commuting safe, reducing regulatory burdens, and supporting members of vulnerable populations and America's working families. Topics covered during the chat complemented the themes of the current "*Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue*."

The Twitter chat supported and augmented the ePolicyWorks online dialogue by allowing employers, workers, organizations, and state and local leaders with knowledge and expertise to discuss their experiences and recommendations. It was promoted to dialogue registrants and through the @ePolicyWorks Twitter handle and email blasts to the vast ePolicyWorks community. The ePolicyWorks team also coordinated with ODEP, OCI, and partner agencies to leverage their communications networks to more widely promote the event.

An ePolicyWorks team member moderated the event and asked all participants to use the unique hashtag #EPWChat. The Twitter chat was open to anyone with an active Twitter account. The chat included featured guests Amber Clayton, Director of the SHRM Knowledge Center, Candee Chambers, Executive Director of DE, Kristina Weger, Senior Associate Director for Policy and Government Affairs at ANA, and Debbie F. Plotnick, MSS, MLSP, Vice President for State and Federal Advocacy at MHA.

During the Twitter chat, the moderator posed questions to the featured guests; participants were encouraged to join the conversation. In addition, participants interacted with each other during the Twitter chat, responding to and commenting on replies. Many participants also retweeted resources and responses from the featured guests to their followers, furthering the reach of the conversation. Throughout the Twitter chat, the @ePolicyWorks hosts reminded and encouraged all participants to visit the online dialogue following the Twitter chat to continue and expand on the conversation. Following the conclusion of the Twitter chat, the ePolicyWorks team reviewed the statistics and analyzed the results, using them to glean additional information and build upon the momentum for the online dialogue.

Please find a compilation of all tweets from the Twitter chat at https://wke.lt/w/s/HUNo-A (open in Chrome).

Appendix A of this document includes resources shared during the chat.

Twitter Chat Metrics

- Number of Tweets posted with the #EPWChat during chat: (including tweets from ePolicyWorks): 97 (plus an additional 11 posts before the chat began and 2 posts after the chat was concluded)
- Number of impressions received on tweets sent by ePolicyWorks during the chat (total number of views): 129,808
- Number of active tweeters (participants who posted at least once, including hosts) during chat: 11
- Number of resources shared during the chat: 10

Key Stakeholder Groups

Key stakeholder groups participated in the chat, sharing ideas, resources and links. These stakeholders, among which are the featured guests, include:

- @ANANursingWorld
- @DirectEmployers
- @MentalHealthAm
- @SHRMAClayton
- @CDETweets
- @NSCsafety
- @SHRMAdvocacy
- @USDOL

Key Themes from Twitter Chat

During the hour-long *Opening America's Workplaces Again Twitter Chat*, participants shared ideas for employers and workers to support the safe reopening of America's workplaces. The wealth of information tweeted and retweeted during the Twitter chat will not only assist USDOL in its mission but also will serve as a resource for employees, employers, organizations, and individual stakeholders. Based on the tweets during the Twitter chat, several themes emerged including the following:

- Mental health is an important component of returning safely to work. Extra breaks, flexible scheduling, and adequate paid time off are essential for employees to attend to their and their family's emotional and mental health needs.

- USDOL might wish to consider outlining frequently asked questions to address issues related to pay and benefits upon employees' return to work, help ensure that employees have financial stability and access to healthcare, and support states to offset increased expenses from unemployment benefits.

- Flexibility is key to opening workplaces. Employers should consider adopting policies such as phased-in reentry, scheduling employees' time in the office, and extending telework options for those who wish to remain at home.

- USDOL should provide guidance for vulnerable individuals for whom return to work may pose unique difficulties due to age or underlying health conditions. This guidance should help employers navigate a return to work if certain workers are or would be at risk.

- USDOL should provide guidance on what constitutes a safe workplace, so employers understand their responsibilities. This could include instructions for social distancing and providing hand sanitizer, disinfectant, paper towels, and soap in all common areas to maintain a healthy working environment.

Twitter Chat Results

The multitude of ideas gathered from both the online dialogue and Twitter chat illustrate that collaboration and crowdsourcing are useful as part of the discussion around how USDOL can best support employers, workers, families, and members of vulnerable populations as America's workplaces begin the process of reopening. USDOL will use the ideas and comments gathered from these two online events to guide its work and resources materials.

Online Dialogue Participant Summary

The *Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue* opened for participation on April 30, 2020, and closed at the end of the day on May 7, 2020. Detailed below is the information on the contributions to the dialogue – ideas, comments and votes, along with the number of online dialogue visits*, registrants, participation rates, location of registrants, and profile information provided by registrants during the registration process. The number of comments includes moderator comments.

Total Contributions to the Online Dialogue

Total number of ideas in the online dialogue: 509

- Ideas in the Reopening Businesses Campaign: 258
- Ideas in the Commuting Safely Campaign: 18
- Ideas in the Working Safely Campaign: 104
- Ideas in the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Campaign: 32
- Ideas in the Accommodating Members of Vulnerable Populations Campaign: 59
- Ideas in the Supporting America's Families Campaign: 38

Total number of comments in the online dialogue: 668

- Comments in the Reopening Businesses Campaign: 274
- Comments in the Commuting Safely Campaign: 25
- Comments in the Working Safely Campaign: 134
- Comments in the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Campaign: 59
- Comments in the Accommodating Members of Vulnerable Populations Campaign: 130
- Comments in the Supporting America's Families Campaign: 46

Total number of votes in the online dialogue: 1,767

- Votes in the Reopening Businesses Campaign: 808
- Votes in the Commuting Safely Campaign: 86
- Votes in the Working Safely Campaign: 317
- Votes in the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Campaign: 109
- Votes in the Accommodating Members of Vulnerable Populations Campaign: 326
- Votes in the Supporting America's Families Campaign: 121

Total Visits and Visitors during the Online Dialogue

Information on the visits to the online dialogue

- Total unique visits to the online dialogue: 21,119
- Total page views: 60,728
- Average pages views per visit: 2.88

- Average visit duration (minutes): 2:29
- Bounce rate (percentage of visitor who leave after viewing the first page of the online dialogue): 48.7%

Information on the visitors to the online dialogue

- Total unique visitors*: 17,878
- Average number of sessions per visitor: 1.18
- Returning visitors: 12.6%
- Total number of visitors who completed the registration: 1,775 (10% of unique visitors)
- Total number of registrants who participated**: 735 (41% of registrants)

*Visitors are all individuals who have viewed the online dialogue. This includes individuals who did not completed the registration process.

**"Participation" includes registering and submitting ideas, comments or votes to the dialogue's online platform.

Self-Reported State Affiliation of Online Dialogue Registrants

State	Total Number of Participants	Percentage of Total
California	192	10.87%
New York	144	8.15%
Florida	94	5.32%
Maryland	84	4.75%
Virginia	82	4.64%
Texas	80	4.53%
Pennsylvania	69	3.90%
Illinois	65	3.68%
Massachusetts	53	3.00%
Michigan	51	2.89%
New Jersey	51	2.89%
Ohio	51	2.89%
Washington	47	2.66%
Georgia	46	2.60%
Connecticut	44	2.49%
District of Columbia	44	2.49%
Wisconsin	36	2.04%
Minnesota	36	2.04%
Rhode Island	35	1.98%
North Carolina	30	1.70%
Colorado	29	1.64%
Missouri	28	1.58%
Iowa	26	1.47%
Tennessee	26	1.47%
Arizona	26	1.47%
Oregon	26	1.47%
Indiana	24	1.36%
Nevada	22	1.25%
South Carolina	22	1.25%
Louisiana	18	1.02%
Alabama	16	0.91%
Kentucky	15	0.85%
Nebraska	13	0.74%
Kansas	12	0.68%
New Mexico	12	0.68%
Oklahoma	11	0.62%
Utah	11	0.62%
New Hampshire	9	0.51%
Arkansas	9	0.51%

| State	Total Number of Participants	Percentage of Total
Montana	9	0.51%
Delaware	8	0.45%
Alaska	7	0.40%
Hawaii	7	0.40%
West Virginia	5	0.28%
Mississippi	5	0.28%
Vermont	4	0.23%
Wyoming	4	0.23%
North Dakota	3	0.17%
South Dakota	3	0.17%
Idaho	2	0.11%
Maine	2	0.11%
U.S. Territories	7	0.40%
Other	12	0.68%

Online Dialogue Registrant Profiles

When registering for the *Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue*, in addition to identifying their state, participants were asked to name the stakeholder group they represented as well as their industry. The choices were predetermined for this question and participants were only allowed to choose one answer. Below is a summary of the responses:

Stakeholder Group	Total Number of Participants	Percentage of Total
Employer or Private Sector Business	538	30.43%
Employee	358	20.25%
State or Local Government Representatives	134	7.58%
Employer Group or Business Organization	104	5.88%
Federal Government Representative	98	5.54%
Advocacy Organization	79	4.47%
Nonprofit	67	3.79%
Health Care Providers	61	3.45%
Research or Educational Institution	54	3.05%
Employee Group or Organization	51	2.88%
Private Insurers	6	0.34%
Other	218	12.33%
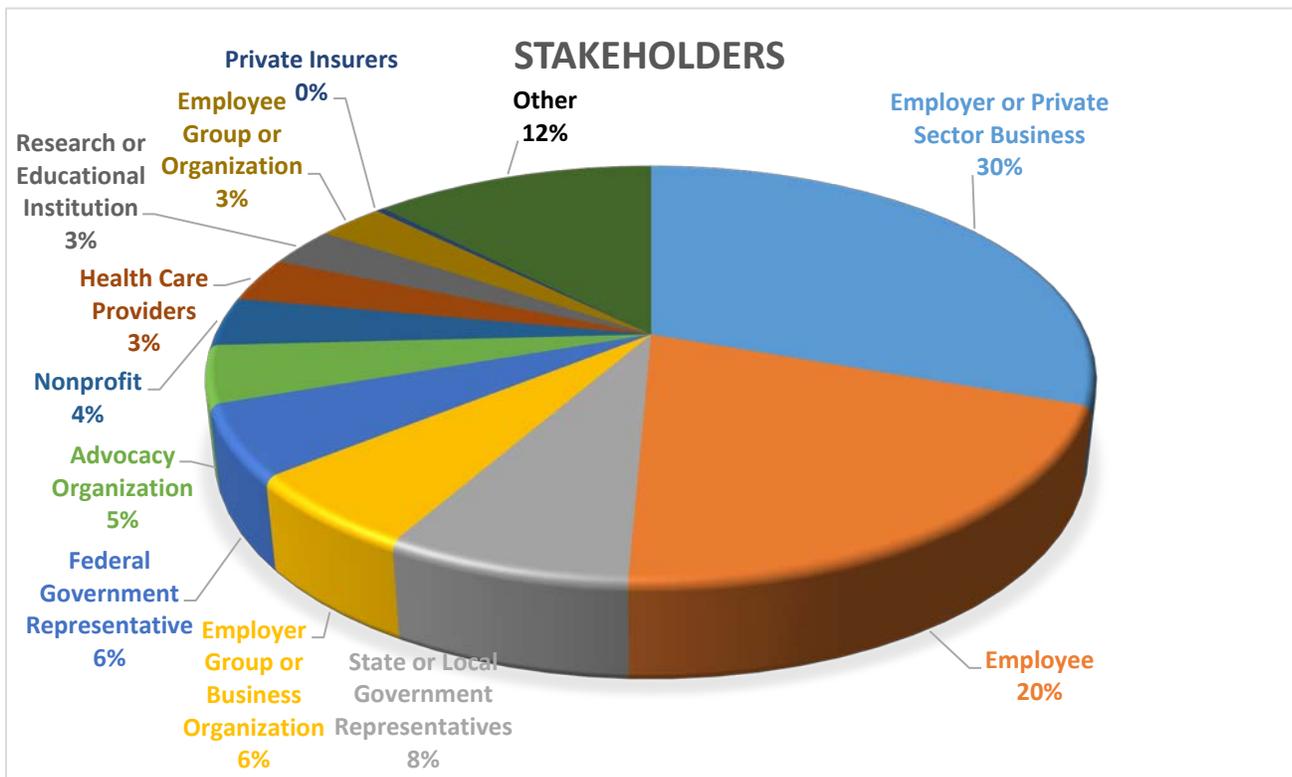
Industry Group	Total Number of Participants	Percentage of Total
Health Care	176	9.95%
Education	147	8.31%
State or Local Government	146	8.25%
Construction/Workforce/Labor	146	8.25%
Manufacturing	116	6.56%
Federal Government	94	5.31%
Financial Services	72	4.07%
Food & Beverage	63	3.56%
Retail	54	3.05%
Transportation	52	2.94%
Hospitality	43	2.43%
Tech	36	2.04%
Energy	24	1.36%
Agriculture	25	1.41%
Defense	20	1.13%
Real Estate	17	0.96%
Telecommunications	13	0.73%
Banking	10	0.57%
Arts/Entertainment	7	0.40%
Sports	5	0.28%
Mining	2	0.11%
Other or None of the Above	501	28.32%

Number of Dialogue Registrants by Industry
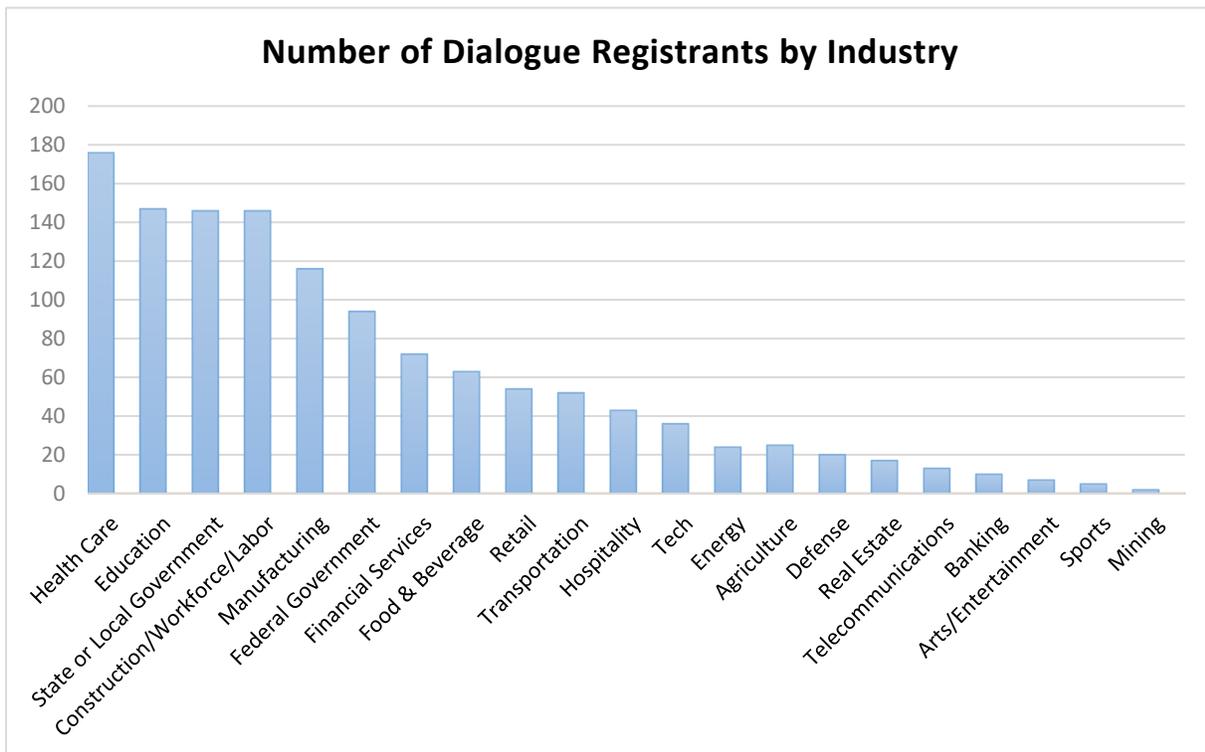
# Review and Analysis of Online Dialogue Contributions

Over the course of the *Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue*, participants from across the U.S. shared thought-provoking and innovative suggestions and recommendations on ways to reopen America's workplaces safely. The range and depth of the ideas submitted and discussed during the online dialogue demonstrates the immense value of engaging citizens in collaboration efforts. Employers, workers, organizations, and state and local government representatives jointly contributed 509 ideas, 668 comments, and 1,767 votes to the dialogue. Based on these contributions, several themes emerged as key ideas among the stakeholders in the discussion around ensuring the safety of workers, families, and members of vulnerable populations as we reopen America for business.

Moderator Tags

USDOL Agencies
In addition to moderating the dialogue by reviewing ideas and adding comments, the dialogue moderators also took the time to tag each idea as based on the agency to which the idea pertained. The predetermined tags included the following: EBSA, ETA, ODEP, OFCCP, OSHA, VETS, WB and WHD. In addition, USDOL added a tag for "other agency" for ideas that pertained to agencies outside of USDOL. The following is a list of ideas tagged by USDOL agency:

- Number of Ideas Tagged EBSA: 10

- Number of Ideas Tagged ETA: 45

- Number of Ideas Tagged ODEP: 51

- Number of Ideas Tagged OFCCP: 9

- Number of Ideas Tagged OSHA: 215

- Number of Ideas Tagged VETS: 13

- Number of Ideas Tagged WB: 8

- Number of Ideas Tagged WHD: 83

- Number of Ideas Tagged Other Agency: 357

Moderator Tags
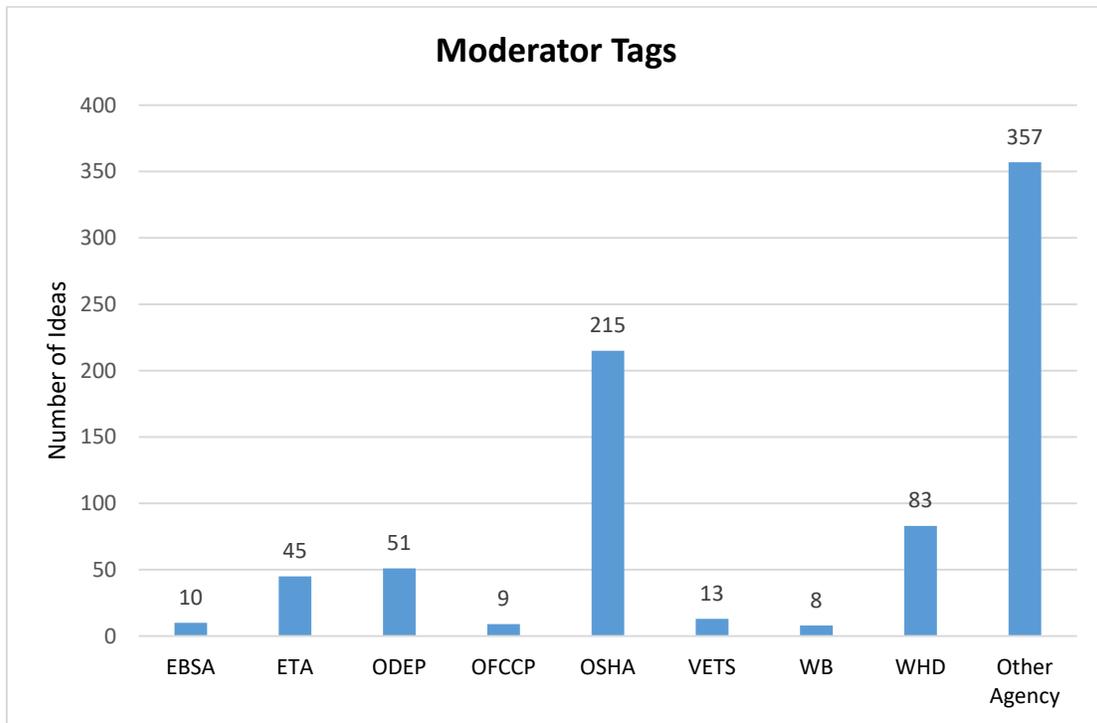
New and Novel

Finally, at the end of the dialogue the tag "new" was added to identify new and novel ideas posted in the dialogue. 173 ideas were tagged as "new."
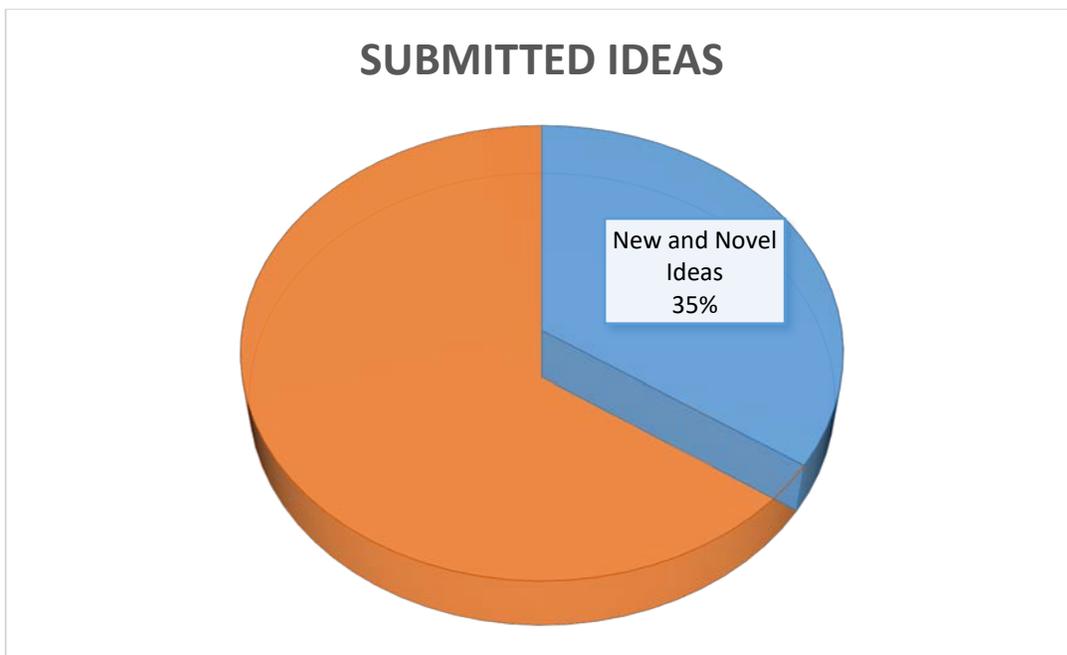
Key Themes and Takeaways

Childcare

Many workers have children and businesses need to play a major part in assuring parents can find safe, accessible, and affordable high-quality childcare. Participants in the dialogue stressed that the economy could not restart if families do not have safe places for their children that they can depend on.

Small Business Concerns

Numerous participants discussed the need to allow small businesses to open. In many areas, large box stores have been able to operate, and local business are suffering. Several ideas discussed steps small businesses could take to safely reopen including creating space for social distancing, providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to customers or by following CDC guidelines. It was important to all participants that USDOL consider small businesses' needs when reopening America's workplaces.

Appropriate Time to Reopen

Many registrants provided different ideas around how to determine the appropriate time to reopen America's businesses. Overall, it was important to many participants the process be fair to all businesses and be clearly communicated to employers, workers, and consumers.

COVID-19 Safety Certification and Guidance

Several ideas discussed the creating of a COVID-19 Safety Certification. This would not only provide guidance for businesses in what they should do to be safe, but it would also let consumers know that businesses are following safety protocols. One idea suggested that OSHA issue an emergency temporary standard (ETS) as soon as possible to protect all workers. Participants stressed the importance of providing education and training materials for employers, business owners, and employees on how to reopen safely. One idea mentioned establishing local COVID-19 Business Advisory Councils.

Access to PPE

Participants discussed the need for PPE to support the reopening of workplaces. Suggestions included making masks and gloves easily available during commuting, working, and shopping.

Changing the Way America Does Business

Many ideas suggested ways to change business protocols so that workers and consumers could stay safe. These ideas included continuing to allow people to work from home, allocating rotating work schedules, creating different business hours, and encouraging appointments. In addition, there was discussions around re-configuring office space with new social distancing guidelines. Finally, many discussed the need to create workplace incentives for those who are sick to stay home and develop office procedures for protecting members of vulnerable populations.

Top Ideas by Vote

Below are the five top ideas by vote from the *Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue*.

The ideas listed in the following section include minor typographical corrections, which have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised posts.

TOP IDEAS BY VOTE

1	2	3	4	5
20 Votes	20 Votes	19 Votes	19 Votes	19 Votes

1. Flexibility
2. Employees that cannot maintain distance
3. TESTING,TESTING,TESTING FIRST
4. Not without following public health principles -- so NOT YET
5. CHILD CARE A SIGNIFICANT ROADBLOCK TO RETURNING TO WORK
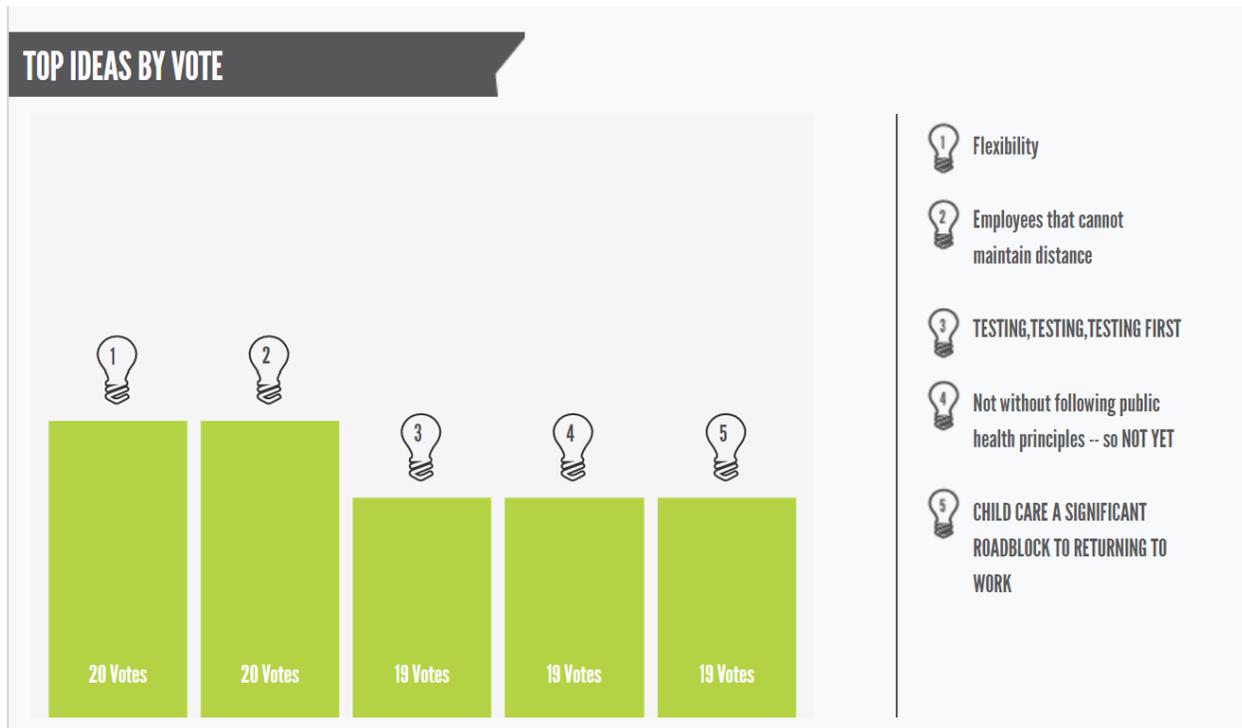
Flexibility

Topic: Reopening Businesses
20 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 20 Net Votes
Comments: 1
Followers: 2
Moderator Tags: OSHA, ODEP

A "one size fits all" approach isn't the answer. We have to find how to balance the need for physical safety from this virus while providing for mental and emotional health as well as economic security. There is no guarantee that a vaccine will be found, we live in a world with many viruses that do not have a vaccine. (HIV, Epstein-Barr, Malaria and the common cold) Event he standard flu vaccine is not a guarantee against infection. The distribution of the virus isn't consistent across the country. As of 5/04/20 Oterio County NM has a total of 6 confirmed cases with an infection rate of 9.1 per 100,000 people. Whereas Bergin County NJ has 16,185 confirmed cases and an infection rate of 1,740 per 100,000 cases. (nytimes.com)

As human beings we have a need to connect to others socially, isolation can lead to depression, suicide and other mental health issues.

1. Many professional services such as accounting, customer service and some medical/health care services can and should consider increasing remote telework opportunities.

2. For those jobs that do require direct contact, such as salons, restaurants and others, we should take reasonable precautions:

A. PPE for employees and guests. However, employees should receive instruction on the proper use of PPE. Poorly used PPE can lead to increased infection rates.

B. Restrictions on capacity to maintain distancing.

C. Accommodations should be made for those who are at a higher risk of complications from infection.

2. Decisions to open and limitations on the number of guests should be based on local data. From the data listed above, it's obviously much safer to visit a salon in Oterio County NM than in Bergin County NJ.

3. Invest in contact tracing as opposed to tracking body temperatures. Although a fever is a common symptom of infection, not everyone who has had the virus had a fever. There are also other factors such as medications or physical activity that may increase/decrease body temperatures

Employees that cannot maintain distance
Topic: Reopening Businesses
21 Up Votes | 1 Down Votes | 20 Net Votes
Comments: 4
Followers: 2
Moderator Tags: OSHA, Other Agency

I am a cosmetologist. There is no way we can maintain distance or not touch our clients I know these businesses want to reopen but I feel we should be given a personal choice. If we feel our lives are in danger of contact with people, we should have a choice to work or not to. We should not be punished because we don't have the luxury of being wealthy.

TESTING, TESTING, TESTING FIRST
Topic: Reopening Businesses
21 Up Votes | 2 Down Votes | 19 Net Votes
Comments: 2
Followers: 2
Moderator Tags: OSHA, Other Agency

Whatever tests WERE available in February 2020, should have been immediately deployed. The decision NOT to use those tests, that were being deployed by the rest of the World, cost us countless lives. If the federal decision makers didn't like the WHO tests, because they had a higher than usual POSITIVE RATE- they could have chosen to use what they had available UNTIL they had what they preferred.

Test on a wide scale basis, the way every medical and health expert (the ones with the actual degrees) have cautioned and ramp up to the 5 million per day they are insisting upon. Then you get that information to these experts and let us hear straight from their mouths what is what.

As bad as this economic downturn is for most Americans, if you are DEAD or permanently disabled by the virus, the economy and its rebound will mean very little to you or your surviving loved ones. And it is not the barons of Industry that will fall if we reopen up too soon, without wide scale testing and tracing. It will be the grocery store clerks, the office cleaners, truck drivers, medical workers and firefighters and police - it will be our loved ones.

Not without following public health principles -- so NOT YET
Topic: Reopening Businesses
21 Up Votes | 2 Down Votes | 19 Net Votes
Comments: 2
Followers: 1
Moderator Tags: OSHA, Other Agency

Listen to the public health scientists, to the doctors. We know what being "open for business" looks like—it looks like 900 workers with COVID-19 from a single Tyson plant in Indiana. Do not use workers like lab rats—especially when we know what the outcome will be. Right now, we do not have enough PPE for the existing "essential workers"—hospitals are barely getting by, and we are doing nothing for those who pick, process, transport, distribute, and sell us food. Until we have a supply of medical-quality masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer for workers, as well as changing workplace operations so workers can remain six feet or more away from each other, and from customers -- and add an enforceable requirement that customers wear some kind of face covering and stay six feet away and/or behind a barrier, the business should not open. There is no way for customers to eat food while wearing masks, and thus, restaurants should remain takeout or delivery only. There is no way for someone to provide a haircut or manicure to a customer while remaining 6 feet away, or behind a barrier, so we should not reopen hair/nail salons or barber shops. Those are not essential services, and workers deserve to be protected. I know keeping businesses closed is bad for the economy, you know what is worse for the economy? Businesses closed because they have made all their workers too sick to come in; businesses that become known as places where the virus can spread easily. Also bad for the economy: hospitals that get overwhelmed and doctors and nurses getting sick. Economists all agree that setting up workers to get sick and die is bad for the economy. A closed business might come back. One that opens and makes their workers sick and increases transmission among the community is a business that I will never go back to. I am thoroughly disgusted that

the so-called Department of Labor is showing less than zero concern for workers. I hesitated to submit this comment because I believe the purpose of this website is not to actually figure out how to do this safely, but to encourage people to think businesses should reopen now, and it's only a question of some superficial "best practices guidelines" and wishful thinking to make it happen.

CHILD CARE A SIGNIFICANT ROADBLOCK TO RETURNING TO WORK
Topic: Reopening Businesses
19 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 19 Net Votes
Comments: 3
Followers: 3
Moderator Tags: WHD, Other Agency, New

If schools remain closed but childcare opens, there's still a problem. Anyone with children has experienced the shock of the cost of quality childcare and summer camps. In New York, where it is especially expensive, programs like Bright Horizons can cost upward of $25K per child, and this doesn't include additional fees for extra time before or after care. Then there's the whopping cost of summer camp, from $7K to 9K with additional fees for before and after care because these programs do not support the working parent. Camps are from 9-3 or 9-4, forcing parents to pay additional to cover a typical workday plus the time to commute to and from work to the camp, if bus service is not needed or reasonable. Many full-time parents need 8am-6pm coverage and have to pay for 2 additional hours on top of the $7K to $9K they have already shelled out.

ON-SITE CHILD CARE: One way around the childcare burden is to provide on-site childcare

CONTINUE TELE-COMMUTE OPTIONS: Another idea is having businesses continue to offer flexible work options long past COVID-19 so that one parent is always home. The problem of childcare would be solved if one parent could stay at home and do telework part-time or full-time, on a flexible schedule, to care for young children.

INCREASING ESSENTIAL SALARIES: If salaries were higher for the main breadwinner or all people required to be on-site (including essential workers like grocery store and pharmacy workers as well as delivery, sanitation, utility and mail people, in addition to health care and public safety workers, etc.) perhaps a second income wouldn't be necessary. In the past, when many women were staying home, summers with the children were the norm, not expensive camps. Families could live off one income 50 years ago. Having both parents work now requires high childcare expenses that nearly negate the benefits of a second job, if it weren't for high healthcare costs.

Childcare is the greatest hurdle for families. If work reopens and there is no telecommute option, as with my position (because the technology is not being made available for me to do my job at home), and there is no child care or essential child care, then there is a real risk that getting back to work will be impossible. And if childcare centers are closed, and/or essential care is not available, then one parent needs to be home at all times for young children. When schools

reopen, many employees will be hurting for cash. Companies that offer on-site childcare will be desirable to working families.

Top Trending Ideas

Below are the top trending ideas over the course of the *Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue*. Trending is determined based on the idea's percent growth in number of views, comments, votes, and followers.

The top trending idea, **Employees that cannot maintain distance**, was also the second top idea by vote. See the Top Ideas by Vote section for a full description. Below are the four other top trending ideas.

The ideas listed in the following section include minor typographical corrections, which have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised posts.

TRENDING IDEAS APRIL-2020 TO MAY-2020

1 — 4.4 per day — Employees that cannot maintain distance
2 — 4.29 per day — Restore Freedom in America and Allow Schools and Businesses to Reopen Immediately
3 — 4 per day — The data has been incorrect, businesses need to re-open
4 — 4 per day — Needs to be NOw
5 — 3.3 per day — Should have never been closed !

Restore Freedom in America and Allow Schools and Businesses to Reopen Immediately
Topic: Reopening Businesses
5 Up Votes | 25 Down Votes | -20 Net Votes
Comments: 1
Followers: 1
Moderator Tags: Other Agency, New

Predictions were highly over-exaggerated, and the healthcare system is not in any danger of being overwhelmed. Except in a few hot spots, medical systems have been greatly underutilized, have lost millions in revenue, and thousands of patients have been waiting for needed care.

Doctors and healthcare workers have been furloughed. Newly constructed overflow facilities remain empty. Hospital operations have been cut by 40-50% (in the metro Milwaukee area), and EMS transport providers (ground and air ambulances) have seen the same 40-50% decline in business.

ER doctors have been reporting that patients with serious health conditions (such as strokes) are not seeking timely medical care when necessary. Patients have been waiting to seek care, sometimes until it is too late to help them. Patients have stated that they thought the medical facilities didn't want to be bothered with health problems other than COVID-19, or they were afraid that they would contract the disease by visiting a hospital lined wall-to-wall with COVID patients (which was never the case).

Our best bet at this point is to open the economy and allow the development of herd immunity. The WHO has praised the approach that Sweden took and declared their COVID response a model for the world. Sweden did not issue a lockdown.

Government should provide information and recommendations only, not mandates. Americans should decide for themselves--when and how to open their businesses, whether they want to stay home or venture out, whether or not they want to wear a mask, etc. The government response has been inconsistent and is viewed as a totalitarian overreach in many states.

The data has been incorrect, businesses need to re-open
Topic: Reopening Businesses
11 Up Votes | 17 Down Votes | -6 Net Votes
Comments: 1
Followers: 1
Moderator Tags: OSHA, New

Based upon incorrect data, overestimated effects, and false death reporting (changing death totals by over 30,000 less than previously reported), we now know that all the information this shut down was predicated on to be false.

Therefore, all businesses should be allowed to immediately open with safety precautions in place. Notices requiring social distancing, stay home when ill, hand washing and basic hygiene, and sanitizing high contact areas should be enforced, but businesses should be allowed to open.

Businesses should receive assistance from local health officials in how to maintain a safe and sanitary environment for employees and customers, and for those that refuse to maintain safe and sanitary workplaces, any fine/closure can fall under the jurisdiction of local health officers and code enforcement with just cause.

Businesses also should not be penalized for cases of illness unless proven that they were negligent in mitigating risks, and that there would not have been any possibility of contraction of illness from any other outside source.

Employees/consumers that still wish to "shelter in place" may continue to do so for as long as they deem necessary, but for those receiving unemployment assistance that are unwilling to return to work after businesses re-open, they need to have a cut-off date for benefits based upon factual data from health officers that determine a risk either no longer exists or has been managed to an acceptable point where there are no closure orders remaining.

Needs to be NOW
Topic: Reopening Businesses
4 Up Votes | 16 Down Votes | -12 Net Votes
Comments: 3
Followers: 0
Moderator Tags: Other Agency

Responsibility is key but we are Overdue to open because people are literally being ruined or made unhealthy because of this.

Should have never been closed!
Topic: Reopening Businesses
7 Up Votes | 26 Down Votes | -19 Net Votes
Comments: 1
Followers: 2
Moderator Tags: Other Agency

*This whole thing has been a whole lot of ridiculous! Instead of paying everyone $1,200 how about using that money to test EVERYONE! Then those who are positive get quarantined and the rest go on as usual. Shutting down the economy and possibly ruining it forever for a virus that .1 percent of the population gets (yes that is POINT ONE PERCENT - Do the math!) is ridiculous.*

Most Active Ideas

Below are the most active ideas from the *Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue*. Most active is determined based on the idea's total number of views, comments, votes, and followers over the course of the dialogue.

Three of the most active ideas, **Should have never been closed!**, **Restore Freedom in America and Allow Schools and Businesses to Reopen Immediately**, and **The data has been incorrect, businesses need to re-open** were also the top trending ideas. See the Top Trending Ideas section for a full description. Below are the two other top trending ideas.

The ideas listed in the following section include minor typographical corrections, which have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised posts.

MOST ACTIVE IDEAS APRIL-2020

1 — 34 Points
2 — 34 Points
3 — 31 Points
4 — 29 Points
5 — 28 Points

1 Should have never been closed !
2 OPEN NOW!
3 Restore Freedom in America and Allow Schools and Businesses to Reopen Immediately
4 The data has been incorrect, businesses need to re-open
5 Opening Themes Parks
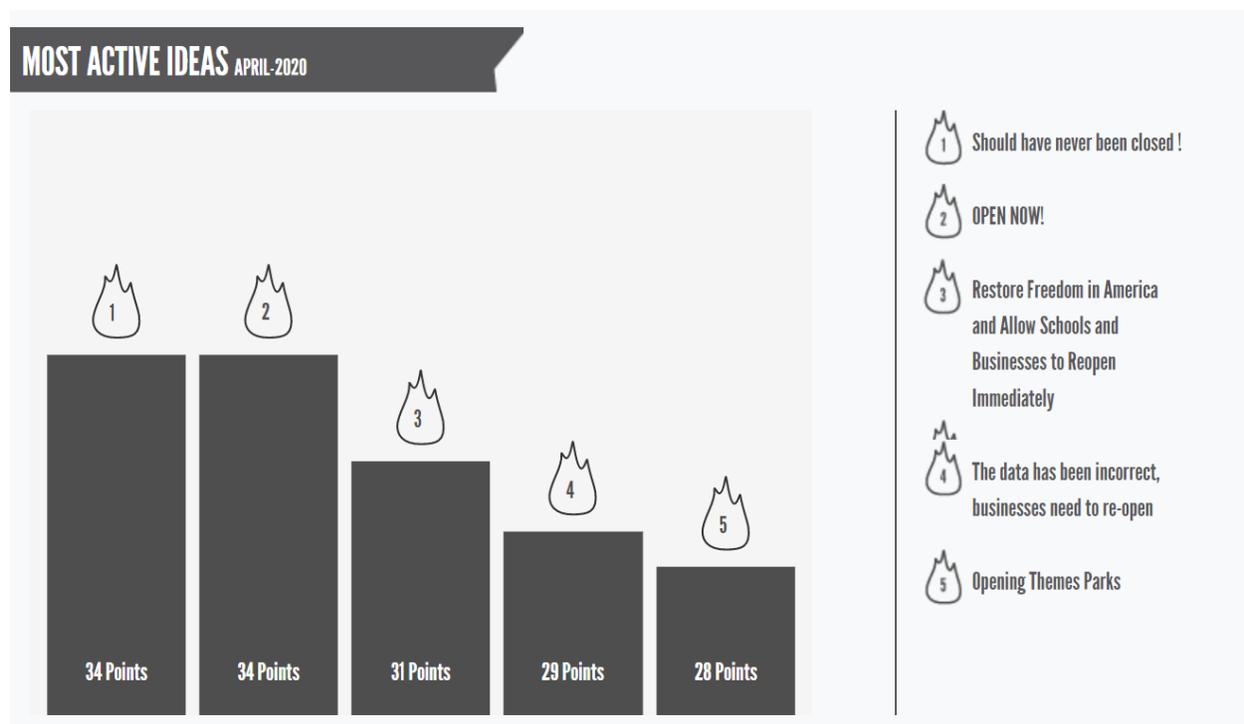
OPEN NOW!
Topic: Reopening Businesses
7 Up Votes | 20 Down Votes | -13 Net Votes
Comments: 7
Followers: 2
Moderator Tags: Other Agency

The carnage among small businesses is far greater than the loss of life from the virus. This is not a question of lives vs economy, its lives lost to virus vs lives lost to economic carnage. Lives lost to economic carnage will be far greater than lives lost to the virus.

Way too many employees are using fake virus fears to justify unemployment benefits, which exceed what they earn while working. We are teaching people to be government dependents. We see signs in the national parks that say, "don't feed the animals, it makes them dependent", we should not do this to employees.

<u>Opening Themes Parks</u>
Topic: Reopening Businesses
2 Up Votes | 23 Down Votes | -21 Net Votes
Comments: 3
Followers: 1
Moderator Tags: Other Agency

With cooperation Employer and Employees, we can work together and help the economic to open the Parks wearing mask and gloves. Just providing masks and gloves we can keep the Park safe. Need to bring Tourist and Planes and follows the tips to control the Virus.

Most Popular Ideas

Below are the two most popular ideas from each of the *Opening America's Workplaces Again National Online Dialogue's* six topic areas. Most popular is determined based on the idea's total number up votes, comments, and followers at the conclusion of the dialogue.

The ideas listed in the following section include minor typographical corrections, which have in no way impacted the substance or the intention of the revised posts.

Most Popular Ideas from the Reopening Businesses Campaign

1. **Flexibility** *(the full description of this idea can be found under* Top Ideas by Vote*)*
   20 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 20 Net Votes
   Comments: 1
   Followers: 2
   Moderator Tags: OSHA, ODEP

2. **Employees that cannot maintain distance** *(the full description of this idea can be found under* Top Ideas by Vote*)*
   21 Up Votes | 1 Down Votes | 20 Net Votes
   Comments: 4
   Followers: 2
   Moderator Tags: OSHA, Other Agency

Most Popular Ideas from the Commuting Safely Campaign

1. **Free mask and gloves for the poor who commute and shop when can**
   16 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 16 Net Votes
   Comments: 3
   Followers: 1
   Moderator Tags: OSHA

   I have noticed that those who cannot afford or know how to make masks are the poor and struggling ; I think it's only fair that there should be policy where mask and disposable gloves or hand sanitizer is available at the MBTA and stores. Thank you.

2. **Masks**
   14 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 14 Net Votes
   Comments: 2
   Followers: 3
   Moderator Tags: OSHA, Other Agency

   When out of the home, all persons should wear a mask. This would help decrease transmission of pathogens. This should be mandated as stores and public place begin to reopen. Fines for any persons that do not obey the mandated order.

<u>Most Popular Ideas from the Working Safely Campaign</u>

1. **Continuing Telework and Remote Work**
    16 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 16 Net Votes
    Comments: 1
    Followers: 1
    Moderator Tags: OSHA

    Phase 1

    Essential Workers: these positions are required be tested (whether they have systems or not but based on the scope of their position. The unknown variables about asymptomatic employees is one of the biggest concerns since these individuals are deemed carriers and do not show signs of COVID-19

    PPE equipment would be made mandatory for workers according to local and state requirements

    Employees physically is the office will be limited to guidelines and work proximity in order to maintain social distancing

    Remote/Telework guidelines should be followed and expanded if necessary:

    Phase 1: Review current positions and continue to allow maximum 5-day remote work schedule to continue with quarterly review.

    If an employee has tested positive for COVID-19, they must be retested and provide documentation before returning to the facility.

    Phase 2: Workers will continue to perform 100% telework will be monitored with reviews every 14 days and by watching local reporting on the number of cases reported related to COVID-19

    Based on case assessments from local health officials, organizations will make decisions on whether to have workers continue telework or reduce days based on workload assessments (mandatory in-office meetings, etc.,)

    Federal Agencies are [presently conducting AWA pilots, this is a great opportunity to review the results of the forced mandatory telework, benefits and areas of improvement). Reexamine current telework opportunities based on these findings to allow more employees to work remotely

    Agencies must establish which physical positions can conduct work while accommodating social distancing. Employees who have physical positions will return to the workplace in numbers as outlined by CDC. These workers will be required to wear PPE (if still required by state mandate). These employees must receive testing before returning to the premises. A medically personnel should take the temperature of

incoming employees. If there are employees who exhibit symptoms while on the premises, the employee should leave the premises for testing.

Management must conduct performance management reviews to assess work deliverables and there impacts with staff who continue telework to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Phase 3

Continued telework while allowing limited staff to enter the premises as outlined by local officials and CDC guidelines. Employees must be tested prior to returning to the workplace. Employee's returning off telework are based on workplace needs.

Agencies will reassess telework guidelines to open more opportunities for working remotely based on production reviews

2. **Employee Interaction**
   Topic: Working Safely
   15 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 15 Net Votes
   Comments: 1
   Followers: 1
   Moderator Tags: OSHA, Other Agency

   Employee interaction must be limited, and PPE must be used including face masks and gloves where needed. Sanitizing prior to shift and after, as well as limiting the sharing or equipment. Education is essential to promote compliance. In theory, if everyone follows the PPE and social distancing guidelines, workplace sickness should almost be a non-issue.

   In addition, continue the trend with working at home when possible and video conferencing for as many activities as possible.

Most Popular Ideas from the Accommodating Members of Vulnerable Populations Campaign

1. **Vulnerable working class**
   17 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 17 Net Votes
   Comments: 5
   Followers: 2
   Moderator Tags: OSHA, ODEP

   Reasonable accommodations should be given to every employee who has pre-existing medical conditions which makes them vulnerable to COVID-19. It should be mandatory that these employees are place in a safe working environment which includes at minimal telework.

2. **Reopening safely with accommodations for at-risk persons**
16 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 16 Net Votes
Comments: 7
Followers: 4
Moderator Tags: ODEP

How does the Nation plan to reopen in a way that will not put at-risk populations in frequent contact with the public and risk their health? Once businesses reopen, individuals will have to choose between their livelihood and their health. In order to remain employed they may be forced back to work. What happens to those who are high-risk or have high-risk individuals in their household? Even with social distancing measures in place, our local grocery store reported employees that contracted COVID-19 at work. Will there be provisions and laws the jobs of high-risk employees and mandate that work from home orders may remain intact until the threat of COVID-19 is gone? Now that the seriousness of this disease is realized by the general public, how are we going to ensure that all Americans feel safe to go to work and are not just going to work to meet their financial obligations? There are many employers out there that will only do the minimum of what they are required to do. How will America and the DOL protect the vulnerable employee populations and their vulnerable family members during the reopening phase?

Most Popular Ideas from the Supporting America's Families Campaign

1. **Childcare**
14 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 14 Net Votes
Comments: 2
Followers: 2
Moderator Tags: Other Agency

Before you start bringing people back to work, you need to figure out schools and childcare. Parents cannot resume going to work if there is no one to take care of their kids. With summer nearly here that include summer camps and activities which some may have already suspended or put on hold. Groups like the YMCA, PJCC. Parks and Recreation Departments, scouting organizations and other on profits have either cancelled or never released sign up schedules.

2. **Businesses and government need to do more to support a high-quality childcare system**
11 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 11 Net Votes
Comments: 1
Followers: 1
Moderator Tags: Other Agency

Businesses rely on workers many of whom have children. For too long we have ignored this fact and left families on their own to find full or part time care for their children. Businesses need to play a major part in assuring parents can find accessible, affordable high-quality childcare. This means family friendly business policies and childcare support in the form of scholarships. High quality childcare supports the current and future work force and is essential for our country's economic prosperity.

Most Popular Ideas from the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Campaign

1. **One Website for All Regulations**
   Topic: Reducing Regulatory Burdens
   15 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 15 Net Votes
   Comments: 2
   Followers: 3
   Moderator Tags: ETA, OSHA, WHD, New

   As an HR professional I have been inundated with emails and newsletters from the federal government, state government, benefit carriers, banks, and HR consultants. Often the emails will contain links to other sites -- IRS, SBA, OSHA, etc. Navigating the regulations has become tedious and frustrating especially when conflicting information is found.

   I would be grateful for one website that HR professionals and business owners can use to guide us to the most recent federal and state regulations. Ideally, the website would allow us to filter content (and links) applicable to our employer size.

2. **Unemployment Platform Development**
   Topic: Reducing Regulatory Burdens
   13 Up Votes | 0 Down Votes | 13 Net Votes
   Comments: 2
   Followers: 1
   Moderator Tags: ETA

   Presently, the unemployment system is outdated. Once this pandemic event has subsided, the infrastructure, technology and overall process has to be evaluated at a state and national level. The bottlenecks, long hold periods and current staffing alignment have to be addressed. To hear that these systems are over 30 years old is troubling in this age of technology. We must give unemployment recipients and works a better vehicle for this process.

Appendix A: Resources Shared During the Dialogue and Twitter Chat (Alphabetical by Organization)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Businesses and Workplaces](#)
- [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)

Mental Health America

- [Take a Mental Health Test](#)

National Safety Council

- [NSC Launches SAFER Nationwide Task Force to Ensure Employee Safety Through Pandemic](#)

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

- [What You Should Know About the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act and the Coronavirus](#)

U.S. Department of Labor

- [CareerOneStop](#)
- [Coronavirus Resource](#)
- [Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion's Mental Health Toolkit: Resources for Fostering a Mentally Healthy Workplace](#)
- [ETA Rapid Response Services](#)
- [ETA Job Corps](#)
- [Family and Medical Leave Act](#)
- [Mine Safety and COVID-19](#)
- [OASP Rulemaking and Regulatory Reform](#)
- [ODEP Return-to-Work Toolkit](#)
  [ODEP Workplace Flexibility Toolkit](#)
- [OSHA COVID-19 Workplace Safety Resources](#)
- [Resource on Accommodation and Compliance: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)](#)
- [WHD COVID-19 Resources](#)

White House Coronavirus Task Force

- [Coronavirus.gov](#)
- [White House Guidelines: Opening Up America Again](#)