

BUSINESS & WORKFORCE
RECOVERY SOLUTIONS

Louisiana Disaster Recovery Conference

A TIME OF HOPE, RESTORATION
AND RENEWAL

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022

10 AM - 6 PM
JOIN VIA ZOOM

businessworkforcerecovery.com

Louisiana Disaster Recovery Conference

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It is my privilege and honor to welcome you to our 2022 Louisiana Disaster Recovery Conference: A Time of Hope and Renewal.

For over two years, we have all encountered what is probably the largest global disaster in our lifetime, the COVID-19 pandemic. In Louisiana, we have added numerous other disasters like hurricanes, floods, tornadoes and freezes to the list and some of us are barely hanging on. Many are very tired of dealing with it all and having to make so many changes in such a short period of time.

It is my goal that this conference truly serves as a time of Hope, Restoration, and Renewal. Whether you are a leader helping others, a service provider, are going through a tough crisis yourself, or are seeking education and assistance to keep moving forward, we are glad to have you spend this time with us.

We crafted the conference with a very distinct group of outstanding speakers to serve a unique, diverse audience that comes from all walks of life. Each speaker has been selected for a special purpose to tie all key components together in order to offer a comprehensive approach to disaster recovery programming and project implementation.

Although we have faced struggles and triumphs along the way, I am very grateful for the journey. I feel blessed and thrilled to see my vision become a reality on March 23, 2022, with everyone sharing and working together in our conference.

Please remember to serve others, even in your tough times, to be an encouragement and to ask for your own help when needed. It is my wish that everyone can have brighter days ahead as we try to move from just surviving to thriving. I trust that our conference might offer each of you the start to a brighter tomorrow.

This conference could not be possible without the LA Department of Revenue Nonprofit grant, our excellent coordination team, collaborators, and you, the participants. We appreciate your participation and support! In the future, please let us know how we might assist you.



Dr. Cathy Denison-Robert

Conference Director, Executive Director & Business Consultant

Louisiana Disaster Recovery Conference

ABOUT BUSINESS & WORKFORCE RECOVERY SOLUTIONS

Our non-profit 501(c)(3) organization strives to develop collaborative relationships with other non-profit agencies, professionals, governmental, and faith-based organizations to provide comprehensive disaster recovery assistance to small businesses, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, independent contractors, part-time business owners, workers, and their families.

By making personal contacts and hearing disaster and crisis stories, project leaders identify unmet recovery needs and help to make the right connections or provide professional services to aid the client in the recovery process.

This comprehensive, collaborative approach includes a robust outreach effort, a keen listening component, a compassionate heart, educational programming, consulting assistance, and a holistic posture toward disaster recovery. We care about our client's stories and want to see them recover and flourish.

CONFERENCE GUIDELINES & NOTES

For all participants to have the best conference experience, we ask that you follow the below guidelines.

- Upon entering the conference, please confirm your microphone is muted, and continue to stay muted during the sessions. We encourage your participation and questions via chat!
- If you have a question for our speaker, drop it into the chat for everyone to view. Our emcees will share your questions with the speakers at the appropriate time in each session.
- If you choose to leave during the conference, but would like to join at a later session, you will use the same Zoom link originally messaged to you to rejoin.
- We ask that each participant complete the post-event survey that will be emailed to everyone immediately following the conference. You can access it early [here](#).

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SPECIAL THANKS

This conference was made possible in thanks to our grant funding partner the Louisiana Department of Revenue, our dedicated Board of Directors, Conference Coordination Team, and our Watch Party Hosts.

- **Board of Directors:** Barker Dirmann, J.D., Jody Robert, M.Div., Margaret Wheeler, Ed.D., Dan Denson, Ed.D., Cathy Denison-Robert, Ph.D.
- **Conference Coordination Team:** Cathy Denison-Robert, Ph.D., Morgan Almeida, Melissa Thompson, Ph.D., Nancy Tower
- **Watch Party Hosts:** SOWELA Workforce Solutions and the Kingdom Center in DeRidder

PROJECT FOCUS & FUNDER

The Louisiana Nonprofit & Small Business Assistance Program grant project for Business & Workforce Recovery Solutions is entitled The Southwest Louisiana Education and Employment Assistance COVID Recovery Project (SWLA Ed & Employment Assistance Recovery Project). The LA Department of Revenue provided the grant funds for this project to provide educational assistance to individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Focus is on developing educational and employment assistance programming that can provide clients and participants with a comprehensive view of how to improve life (personal, business, workforce, other) when dealing with the COVID pandemic and other disasters. The featured educational event is our LA Disaster Recovery Conference hosted virtually.

COLLABORATION

This LA Disaster Recovery Conference funded by a LA Department of Revenue nonprofit grant includes collaboration with the Southwest LA Recovery Project for Small Businesses, Workers, and Families mainly funded by the United Way of Southwest LA.

- **Southwest LA Recovery Project for Small Businesses, Workers, and Families Team:** Cathy Denison-Robert, Ph.D., Nancy Tower, Misty Watson, Roxane Boudoin, Maria Alcantara Faul, David Dillon, Jeleana Simar, Annemarie Ryan

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AGENDA

10:00 - 10:40 AM	Welcome
10:45 - 11:05 AM	Emergency Management during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Other Disasters
11:10 - 11:40 AM	Employment Assistance and Workforce Training during Uncertain Times
11:45 AM - 12:25 PM	Current State of the US and Louisiana Business Climates
12:30 - 12:40 PM	BREAK & PRIZES
12:40 - 1:30 PM	Building a Resilient Organization that Moves from Surviving to Thriving
1:35 - 2:15 PM	Disaster Recovery for Small Businesses and Nonprofits: Real Stories of Struggles and Triumphs
2:15 - 2:25 PM	BREAK & PRIZES
2:25 - 3:00 PM	Taking a Faith-Based Approach to Improve Spiritual Recovery
3:05 - 4:00 PM	Health and Healing in the Aftermath of Disaster
4:05 - 4:35 PM	The Changed Educational System: A Firsthand View from Educators
4:35 - 5:35 PM	Let's Keep On Going: A Journey of Restoration and Renewal
5:40 - 6:00 PM	Moving Forward: Next Steps to Building Stronger

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WELCOME

10:00 - 10:40 am

The introductory session includes our Welcome address and a message from our state funding agency. The conference plans for the day will be announced.



BRYAN BEAM

Parish Administrator, Calcasieu Parish Police Jury

Bryan Beam is the Parish Administrator at the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury. Born and raised in Lake Charles, Bryan has served the parish since 1994.



REV. JODY ROBERT

Unite Us SWLA Community Engagement Manager

Jody Robert, M.Div., currently works at Unite Us as the Community Engagement Manager for Southwest Louisiana. Also, he is a part-time Certified Professional Coach and Chaplain.



DR. CATHY DENISON-ROBERT

Conference Director, Executive Director & Business Consultant

Dr. Cathy Denison-Robert, MBA is the Director of the 2022 Louisiana Disaster Recovery Conference: A Time of Hope and Renewal and the Executive Director of Business & Workforce Recovery Solutions, Inc. Since May 2021, Cathy has led the Southwest LA Recovery Project for Small Businesses, Workers, and Families.



KEVIN RICHARD

LA Dept. of Revenue Secretary

Kevin Richard began serving as the Secretary for the Louisiana Department of Revenue on February 1, 2022. Kevin also serves as a Commissioner for the Louisiana Remote Sellers Commission and serves as the Chairman of the Louisiana Tax Free Shopping Program.



LUKE MORRIS

LA Dept. of Revenue Deputy Secretary

Luke Morris has served as the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Louisiana Department of Revenue since April 2017 and most recently as the Deputy Secretary.



JENNIFER HILLMAN

LA Dept. of Revenue Grant Mgmt & Revenue Tax Auditor Supervisor

Jennifer Hillman has supervised the Field Audit Individual Income Tax division since 2018.

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EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND OTHER DISASTERS

10:45 - 11:05 am

How do you manage disasters in the time of a pandemic? As we go through multiple disasters at the same time, lines can be blurred on how best to respond in times of crisis. In this session, learn how to best manage emergency situations while offering hope to those impacted.



KEVIN SMITH

Certified Emergency Manager & CEO

Kevin Smith, CEM, is the Chief Executive Officer of Rule One Consulting, LLC. He is a Certified Emergency Manager who has worked with local, state and federal government and nonprofit organizations for more than 25 years. Kevin began his career 1996 with The Salvation Army where he led disaster relief efforts for multiple federally declared disasters as Area Commander including wildfires, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes and earthquakes. In 2001, Mr. Smith served multiple Incident Management General Staff roles for The Salvation Army following the attacks on September 11.

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EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE AND WORKFORCE TRAINING DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

11:10 - 11:40 am

Employment shifts are inevitable during a disaster. As businesses cut back on employees or make the difficult decision to not reopen, many community members are left seeking new employment. Join this session to learn how to navigate the employment waters during times of crisis. We'll discuss employment assistance and workforce training with emphasis on soft skills, strengthening communication skills, and other workforce training activities.



DR. MELISSA THOMPSON

Consultant & Coach

Dr. Melissa Thompson is a consultant and coach at Success Labs with extensive experience in interpersonal communication, public speaking, and talent development. She works with individuals and companies to grow leaders, build teams, and drive results through great people strategy. In addition to her role at Success Labs, she also serves as an organizer and speaker coach for TEDxLSU since its inception in 2012 and is an adjunct faculty member in the LSU E.J. Ourso College of Business.



DR. DAVID LAFARGUE

SOWELA Executive Director of Workforce Solutions

Dr. David LaFargue is the Executive Director for Workforce Solutions at SOWELA Technical Community College. He is charged with customized training, talent development, and creating solutions to meet the needs for Louisiana's workforce. Dr. LaFargue previously served as the LaSTEM and Cybersecurity Program Administrator at the Louisiana Board of Regents. He was responsible for day-to-day operations of the LaSTEM Advisory Council and the Cybersecurity Education Management Council along with Louisiana's STEM and Cybersecurity alignment, fundraising, marketing, and strategic planning.

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CURRENT STATE OF THE US AND LOUISIANA BUSINESS CLIMATES

11:45 am - 12:25 pm

In the wake of natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, how has the US and Louisiana economic and professional business environment shifted? Panelists will walk participants through the current business climate, discussing opportunities and challenges we currently face.



MARC DECOURCEY

Sr. VP of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Marc DeCoursey is senior vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and leads its Corporate Citizenship Center (CCC), which serves as a leading resource for businesses dedicated to making a difference.



STEPHEN WAGUESPACK

President of LABI

Stephen Waguespack is the President and CEO of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI). As the state's chamber of commerce and manufacturer's association, LABI is the largest business advocacy group, representing more than 2,200 business members and 324,000 employees. With over two decades of experience in federal and state politics, Stephen has earned a reputation as an active voice for reform policy in Louisiana.



PAT WITTY

LED Director of Small Business & Community Services

Patrick has served as the Director of Small Business and Community Services at Louisiana Economic Development since 2005. He has over 40 years of experience in community and economic development, banking, public finance and government. He serves as staff support for the department's engagement with regional economic development organizations as well as disaster response, recovery and resilience.

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BUILDING A RESILIENT ORGANIZATION THAT MOVES FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

12:40 - 1:30 pm

Our businesses and nonprofits have faced great loss since 2020 while wading through relief application processes and the struggles of rebuilding. In this session, we will cover Essentials for Business Success and a Stay Afloat Resilience model to help navigate challenging conditions. Let's move from just surviving to thriving!



DR. CATHY DENISON-ROBERT

Executive Director & Business Consultant

As a business consultant, coach, trainer, small business owner, university professor, project manager, grants specialist, non-profit Executive Director, and servant leader, Cathy has worked with businesses, non-profit organizations, and aspiring entrepreneurs for over 20 years. She is a mentor, support group facilitator, and small group leader. Much of her disaster recovery experience started from her own business and personal loss.



DR. MAUREEN OREY

Management Consultant & Professor

Dr. Maureen Orey is the CEO of Workplace Learning and Performance Group, a management consulting and training firm. She is certified in Servant Leadership from the San Diego Leadership Institute, and is a certified facilitator of The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Effective Project Management and Crucial Conversations. She is an author and stand-up comic.

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DISASTER RECOVERY FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND NONPROFITS: REAL STORIES OF STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS

1:35 - 2:15 pm

Tune in to this session for true stories of struggle and triumph during the pandemic and natural disasters from business owners and non-profit organization leaders. Hear them speak from their heart. Participants will leave with practical tips to move forward with expectancy.



PATRICIA JONES

Executive Director, Allen Council on Aging

At Allen Council on Aging, Patricia provides services to the aging to ensure their ability to age with dignity and independence in the manner of their choice.



RITA FIELDS

Restaurant Owner & Chef

Chef Rita Fields is the owner of Rita's Family Creole Kitchen. Her love of cooking was instilled at a very early age, as she began to learn to cook from her grandmother when she was only 5 years old.



MIKE BEER

CEO of Calcasieu Area Council Boy Scouts of America

Michael "Mike" Beer has worked for the Boy Scouts of America for over 20 years. In his career he has helped raise over \$60 million dollars and has led his area or been near the top in the country in membership growth and expanding the Scouting program for most of his career.

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TAKING A FAITH-BASED APPROACH TO IMPROVE SPIRITUAL RECOVERY

2:25 - 3:00 pm

Spiritual healing is just as crucial as physical and mental rebuilding in the wake of a disaster or crisis. In this session led by faith-based leaders, hear about stories of many dealing with great loss, recovery through service, and spiritual healing. These leaders will provide practical applications and recommendations for rebuilding one's spiritual life.



JASON BROWN

Chief Marketing Officer of Marketplace Chaplains

Jason Brown currently serves as the Chief Marketing Office for Marketplace Chaplains. He is very passionate about bringing God's love into the workplace to care for the needs of workers and is a frequent speaker/panelist/consultant for faith at work venues and organizations.



REV. JODY ROBERT

Unite Us SWLA Community Engagement Manager

Jody Robert, M.Div., currently works at Unite Us as the Community Engagement Manager for Southwest Louisiana. Also, he is a part-time Certified Professional Coach and Chaplain. He provides public speaking services for churches, civic organizations, and healthcare providers throughout South Louisiana.

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HEALTH AND HEALING IN THE AFTERMATH OF DISASTER

3:05 - 4:00 pm

Disaster and crisis cause ripple effects through a community, including economic and personal impacts. As we tend to focus our efforts on the tangible recovery of businesses, buildings, and homes, we often disregard the emotional, mental, and physical toll a disaster affords us. We will discuss the importance of comprehensive health and healing in the aftermath of disaster as a necessity to building back as a more resilient individual and community.



STEPHEN HEBERT

Registered Nurse & Pastor

Stephen A. Hebert has been a frontline worker serving in the medical field for over thirty years. He later became an ordained minister in 2006, adding a second vocation to his career as a registered nurse. Having been bi-vocational for over fifteen years, he has embraced every challenge and accepted it as an opportunity.



JULIE ESTE-MCDONALD

Licensed Professional Counselor

Julie Este-McDonald is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the states of Louisiana and Texas. She has worked as a counselor, grant manager, an adjunct Psychology instructor at a junior college, and most recently as the Founder, President, and Executive Director of Salt and Light Collaborative, Inc., a nonprofit counseling agency.



DR. JOHN NOBLE, JR.

Orthopedic Surgeon & Entrepreneur

Dr. John Noble is an orthopaedic surgeon and real estate developer in Lake Charles, Louisiana. He is Board Certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgeons and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Dr. Noble has 25 years of private practice experience and has been with the Center for Orthopaedics since 2000.

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**THE CHANGED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM:
A FIRSTHAND VIEW FROM EDUCATORS**

4:05 - 4:35 pm

The news channels aren't short of stories of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on education with topics of teacher burnout, distance learning, and achievement gaps at the forefront. To combat the effects of COVID and other natural disasters in schools and universities, hear from educators on changes in the system, empowerment, and motivating students. We want to offer encouragement to teachers and educators.



KENDRA LEWIS

Teacher & Instructional Coach

Kendra Lewis holds a B.S. in Business Administration and a M.A. in Early Childhood Education. She is a proven educator with 11+ years of educational experience, now serving as an Instructional Coach with the Rapides Parish School District.



DR. BRIAN RASH

FranU Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences

Dr. Brian Rash assumed the role of the Dean for the School of Arts & Sciences in July 2015 and as of August 2021 is serving as Acting Dean of the School of Health Professions. He received his B.S. in Microbiology from Bowling Green State University in 2000 and Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from Louisiana State University in 2004.

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LET'S KEEP ON GOING: A JOURNEY OF RESTORATION AND RENEWAL

4:35 - 5:35 pm

Grammy Award-Winning Educator, Motivational Speaker, Author and Musician Mickey Smith, Jr. will draw on his experiences during the pandemic and other natural disasters to share how to be restored and renewed in uncertain times. As he guides us to "Keep On Going," we will be energized, uplifted, and entertained!



MICKEY SMITH JR.

Grammy Educator, Motivational Speaker, Author, & Musician

EDUCA-TAINER Mickey Smith Jr. is a GRAMMY Music Educator Award Recipient that hails from a forgotten community in the Bayou State of Louisiana and now stands on phenomenal stages encouraging educators to SEE THE SOUND & KEEP ON GOING. Mickey is acclaimed international speaker, saxophonist, author, and master development coach for elementary and middle school band directors as well as a self-management-strategist for educators. Mickey is committed to encouraging and equipping all educators with the tools to Discover Their Sound of significance and Keep On Going with resilience to create a SOUND180 days of school. Smith specializes in motivational keynotes and transformative professional development training sessions for both corporate and educational clients who are ready to engage, educate, and elevate every audience member to excellence. Whether the message is being shared in a School District, a Conference, In-Person or Virtually, Smith believes that everyone has a "sound" (a significance) that has the power to resonate with others and create a shift in the thoughts and perspectives of our next and best. Mickey's motivational mixture of music & message teaches people how to reach people with consistency, intention, and strategy.

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MOVING FORWARD: NEXT STEPS TO BUILDING STRONGER

5:40 - 6:00 pm

Our closing will be a quick session to wrap up, focus on next steps, and move forward to build back stronger.



DR. CATHY DENISON-ROBERT

Conference Director, Executive Director & Business Consultant

As a business consultant, coach, trainer, small business owner, university professor, project manager, grants specialist, non-profit Executive Director, and servant leader, Cathy has worked with businesses, non-profit organizations, and aspiring entrepreneurs for over 20 years. She is a mentor, support group facilitator, and small group leader. Much of her disaster recovery experience started from her own business and personal loss.

GRATITUDE

We thank all participants, speakers, partner organizations, collaborators and media outlets for supporting this conference. We appreciate you!

STAY CONNECTED

Stay connected with Business & Workforce Recovery Solutions. Find out more information about our organization at businessworkforcerecovery.com and follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn.