



The Chamber Building  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **St. Pete Chamber Focuses on 4Rs of a Resilient St. Pete: Relieve– Restart – Recover – Reimagine *Guides Businesses on Restart Considerations***

**APRIL 27, 2020 | St. Petersburg, FL** – The St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce® is working to help Greater St. Pete rebound from the coronavirus pandemic. Using the “4R’s framework in concert with the Florida Chamber of Commerce (Relieve, Restart, Recover, and Reimagine), the Chamber is leading efforts to strengthen businesses, their employees, and their families by providing immediate relief needs, preparing for safe reopening, putting recovery plans into place, and reimagining a more sustainable and resilient St. Pete.

#### **Relieve**

The St. Pete Chamber, in partnership with The Greenhouse, Grow Smarter St. Petersburg, and the Greater St. Petersburg Area Economic Development Corporation (EDC), launched a series of relief efforts targeted at businesses, their employees, and underserved communities to support their immediate needs. These efforts included providing financial information, discounts on teleworking tools, marketing member businesses, and launching virtual learning sessions.

“The Chamber’s first priority has been giving businesses the information they needed to deal with the immediate fallout from the COVID-19 crisis,” says Ryan Griffin, chair of the Chamber, and a litigation attorney at Johnson Pope Bokor Ruppel & Burns, LLP. “Through our virtual town hall and resource guide, we provided resources on how to apply for relief funding and work remotely. We’ll continue to provide relief updates and now will help businesses consider how to safely move into the restarting phase.”

Visit <https://www.stpete.com/resource-guide-for-coronavirus-covid-19/>, <https://stpetegreenhouse.com/prepare/>, <https://growsmarterstpete.com/resources/> and <https://stpeteedc.com/st-petersburg-area-edc-covid-19-business-resource-guide/> for more details.

#### **Restart**

In addition to continued relief efforts, the Chamber and its partners will now also focus on what businesses need to have in place when stay-at-home orders are lifted to resume economic activity while protecting public health. Programs will include:



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- **Business Resiliency Team:** The Chamber and its partners have launched a Business Resiliency Team (BRT) comprised of Business Resiliency Navigators who will establish relationships with business owners and key community leaders to support the long-term survival of St. Petersburg's small business community. Navigators will work one-on-one with businesses for 90 days to overcome the challenges caused by coronavirus. The BRT program is a partnership between Grow Smarter St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg Greenhouse, the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce, and the St. Petersburg Economic Development Corporation. Grow Smarter, primarily funded by the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg, will redirect awarded funds towards the BRT and other community relief efforts. The BRT will collaborate with other business support efforts, including those of One Community and the Pinellas County Urban League.
- **Ready to Restart:** The Chamber is developing information, targeted towards business needs to restart. Keeping a safe and smart St. Pete as the main priority, they're reviewing the financial, operational, sales and marketing, and human resources aspects of transitioning from stay-at-home orders to resuming regular operations.
- **Give 5:** Professionals like attorneys, accountants, bankers, and business consultants will volunteer as part of the Business Resiliency Team, donating five hours of professional time, at no charge, to help business owners get back on their feet.
- **Affinity Groups:** The Chamber has hundreds of members who have signed up for online peer groups based on their size and industry. Members will share ideas, resources, and best practices.
- **Catalyst Podcast:** The Chamber and St. Pete Catalyst will continue their new podcast series, "Coronavirus Impact Insights" that highlights local industry and community leaders and provides business intelligence to help local companies navigate the fallout from the pandemic.
- **Deuces District WiFi:** Grow Smarter St. Petersburg will fund one year of GoZone Wi-Fi connectivity on the Deuces Live corridor to enhance resident access to teleworking and online learning.
- **St Petersburg College Retraining:** Grow Smarter has created an endowed Scholarship Program at SPC to support study in the Grow Smarter industry areas.
- **BecomeStPete.com Jobs Board:** The EDC will continue to expand the BecomeStPete jobs board to support local employers by connecting job seekers affected by the shutdown with new positions.

Chris Steinocher, president and CEO of the Chamber says, "While we are eager to reopen our community, we believe this must be done with the best science and health data along with the best testing and tracing for Pinellas County." He adds, "We'll be working with the City, the County, and health experts to help businesses figure out the practical steps different sectors need to take to resume safe operations."



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## Recover

Once companies reopen, what will it take for customer demand to reach pre-coronavirus levels and companies to be at the new normal? The Chamber and its partners will help businesses work through the restart to recovery phase through 2020 and 2021.

## Reimagine

Once we are at the new normal, the Chamber and its partners will examine a post-pandemic St Pete, and how businesses have learned to innovate, adapt, and create new business models.

## About the Chamber and its Partners

Founded in 1899 as the Board of Trade, the **St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce** now advocates at every level for those issues that change and protect the way we do business. The Chamber leads on efforts to start new business, expand those already here, and attract those who can contribute to our shared vision to grow smarter. In 2013, the Chamber partnered with the City of St. Petersburg to create **The Greenhouse**, which brings together business and government. In 2014, the Chamber and the City created **Grow Smarter St. Petersburg** to focus on equity in economic development. In 2016, this partnership led to the creation of the **Greater St. Petersburg Area Economic Development Corporation** to attract new businesses to the area.

**The St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce**®, originally founded in 1899, now serves more than 1,300 member businesses and organizations. Continually identifying ways to create and enhance opportunities to do business in St. Petersburg, the Chamber works to improve the local economic climate and to build a thriving business environment. The Chamber represents perspectives of local business in St. Petersburg, providing and fostering leadership on important business and community issues. For more, visit [www.stpete.com](http://www.stpete.com).

**The Greenhouse** is St. Petersburg's front door to business growth, providing business owners and entrepreneurs with the education, resources, and assistance necessary to thrive in the local economy. Comprised of an expert team from the City of St. Petersburg and St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce, along with a wide network of partners, the Greenhouse is committed to the economic growth and development of St. Petersburg's economy through comprehensive services for St. Pete's small business community that include business consulting and mentorship, a professional network, impactful signature programs, workshops, and more. For more, visit <https://stpetegreenhouse.com/>

**Grow Smarter** is an economic development strategy that aims to reduce gaps by race and place in St. Petersburg. The initiative brings together 90+ organizations for cross-sector collaboration and resource alignment. For more, visit <https://growsmarterstpete.com>.

**The Greater St. Petersburg Area Economic Development Corporation** is a partner in the Grow Smarter Strategy to create awareness of the business climate in St. Petersburg and to invigorate the growth of jobs in the target sectors of marine and life sciences, data analytics, financial and business services, specialized manufacturing and creative arts and design. For more, visit <https://stpeteedc.com>.

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