

Marketplace Principles for Employers & Government to Return to Economic Normalcy

As Supported by the Signed Employer Organizations

January 2022

Two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, many small businesses across the Commonwealth still have not obtained normalcy, due in large part to constant negative public messaging. Meanwhile, Massachusetts has been a national leader over the past year in vaccinations, our best defense against the virus.

Every small business needs higher sales and/or lower costs to survive and thrive, but the last two years have driven those basic economic needs in the wrong direction. Federal and state loan and grant programs saved many small businesses from permanent closures, yet those programs have ended. Furthermore, some government entities continue costly mandates and counterproductive anti-local economic growth policies and messaging.

Rather than one-size-fits-all, government-imposed mandates, we must return to economic normalcy by recognizing that personal responsibility and appropriate choices by individuals, employers, employees and consumers represent the long-term path forward.

Following are principles to consider and hopefully embrace in the months, and potentially years, to come:

- **Employer:** Decisions on worker and customer safety, including masking and vaccination mandates or enforcement, should be made by employers in close consultation with their workforce to find the appropriate level of safe and efficient operations.

Furthermore, employers should recognize that prolonged remote-work arrangements have a negative economic impact on those small businesses that once provided services for their workforce.

Downtowns and commercial shopping and dining districts remain in a fragile state. Steps should be made to return to safe and more normal operational models, including permanently embracing the new, innovative and flexible customer-service models, such as outdoor dining and curbside shopping.

- **Government:** Allow for individual decisions to be made by employers and their workforce to be responsible and to protect themselves and others. Government-imposed mandates will injure small businesses by lowering sales, raising operational costs, and placing employers in the unfair positions of enforcing health orders.

One-size-fits-all mandates ignore differences from one establishment to another, such as square footage; average density of people per 1,000 square feet of operations; average length of stay in the establishment; and the views, wishes and typical demographics of employees and customers alike.

Any government-imposed mandate on masking, vaccinations or vaccination-status policing should be considered a “taking” and be accompanied by appropriate government compensation through direct grants and/or tax relief for lost sales and increased compliance costs.

Massachusetts Package Stores Association
Massachusetts Restaurant Association
National Federation of Independent Business-MA
North Shore Chamber of Commerce
Retailers Association of Massachusetts