



Main Street Program Tips to Support Local Businesses



Link Resources to Small Businesses

There is a multitude of resources for small businesses through the Main Street Center, especially through their COVID-19 Resource page. Take time to attend and engage in Main Street webinars. Encourage businesses to attend as well. Link businesses to resource that make the big move to online easy. Join and guide businesses in the pursuit of relief funds and funding programs. Distribute information, tool kits, through your websites. Think about creating a ribbon at the top of your website that links viewers to the COVID-19 local updates and resources you are posting. Coronavirus updates and resources should be “above the fold” on your websites during this time. Continually check in to the COVID-19 Main Street Resources page at:

<https://www.mainstreet.org/howwecanhelp/resourcecenter/covid19resources>



The Point Community Network

Interact and utilize The Point network. Directors, Main Street local leaders and allied resources are offering significant discussions and strategies national-wide to combat the negative impacts of the pandemic on local businesses. If you are not signed up for The Point, it is a free resource for Main Street members. Join the conversation and share with others what projects and programs you have initiated in your own communities. Consider the free and discounted resources our Allied Resources are offering during this time. Furthermore, encourage small business owners to take Main Street America’s survey on **Small Business & the Impact of COVID-19**. The data collected will help Main Street advocate to Congress, state legislators and local elected officials for the resources needed by Main Street businesses.



Virtual Volunteering

In the era of social distancing, organizations can find ways to harness volunteers through virtual opportunities. Volunteers can be utilized to write fundraising letter, build websites, data entry, translating documents, data collection, graphic design, marketing, video creation, etc. Moreover, there are multiple free or low-cost virtual volunteering platforms available out there.



Promote Downtown Swag

Russellville is an excellent example of collaborating with multiple community entities for a joint initiative that raises funds and increases sales for local business. In partnership with River Valley Now, Main Street Russellville is selling shirts, mugs, tumblers, decals and more through the #CommUNITY Campaign. Within one week, the campaign has raised over \$20,000. Products are sourced from local businesses and sold on the CommUNITY website. All the proceeds are spent at local businesses. By rallying the community around a focused symbol or slogan, you mobilize people through a shared value. Consider collaborating with city and community stakeholders on a campaign to increase local production and consumption.



Spearhead Crowdfunding

As businesses struggle to pay rent and stay afloat, the need for community support through collective resourcing is crucial. Consider leading a crowdfunding campaign to cover business expenses until they can reopen. Small donations and contributions make a big difference when the whole network of a community participates.



Develop a Local Currency

Local currency is a medium of exchange that can be spent in a particular geographical locality at participating organizations. The aim of a local currency is to encourage spending within a local community. Similar to Bay Bucks in the Bay Area of California, the exchange of national currency for local currency builds a reservoir of funds for the locality. To incentivize the exchange from national to local, offer a 10% discount to any or one participating businesses.