

How to Support Local Businesses During COVID-19

It is possible to make a considerable economic impact during the COVID-19 crisis by supporting local small businesses. Every dollar spent at a small business supports another 50 cents in local business activity. As an added incentive, every ten jobs created at a local business, support an additional seven jobs within the community (Small Business Economic Impact Study, 2018). According to *The Small Business Economic Impact Study*, conducted by American Express in 2018, this impact is possible because for every dollar spent at a local businesses –

- 67 cents stays within the local economy
- 50 cents is created in local business activity (outside of that particular business)

Consider those numbers for a moment. If every ten jobs created by local businesses creates another seven jobs, what would the loss of ten jobs do? The ripple effect can be devastating for the local economy. This makes it critical to keep small businesses operating. Doing so is necessary for our ability to rebound quickly after COVID-19.

Additional reasons to support small businesses -

- Small businesses pay local taxes and employ local people, which helps build local economies.
- Local business owners are neighbors, colleagues and friends. Supporting them helps build community and social capital.
- Local businesses are more likely to have unique, handmade or one-of-a-kind products that can't be found at chain stores or big online retailers.
- Small businesses positively contribute to the character of our community, making it a special place to live.

Ways to Support Local Businesses During COVID-19

Most businesses have altered how they do business in response to COVID-19, but that doesn't mean they are closed. In many cases, they have simply moved online or to an ordering system. This makes it possible to continue supporting local businesses, even if you are unable to physically shop or dine there. Think about the businesses that you typically buy from, restaurants you eat at, ice cream shops you visit for desert, boutiques you purchase from for birthday or anniversary gifts, etc. Then, visit their website and Facebook pages to find out if they are taking orders online or over the phone, if they offer curbside pickup or delivery, and if they are providing services virtually. In many cases, they will be. Continuing to purchase from these

businesses, even in a reduced capacity, can help to keep people employed. Other suggestions include -

- Purchasing gift cards to be used at a later date
- Ordering dinner delivery for friends, family and colleagues you would normally have dined with
- Maintaining subscriptions and memberships with local organizations
- Use Facetime or Zoom to get bids from contractors for projects that can start immediately once the restrictions have been lifted

We Are In This Together

COVID-19 will pass and when it does, it is important for us to continue supporting one another. We don't yet understand what the full economic impact of this will be, but we do know that we are strong as a community that supports one another. As always, we are here to support local businesses who need information and assistance.

References

American Express. (2018, November 13). *Small Business Economic Impact Study*. Retrieved from American Express:
<https://about.americanexpress.com/press-release/another-reason-to-shop-small-on-small-business-saturday>