

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Support Local Businesses



Take Out and Delivery

Many states and cities have shut down the sit-down portions of restaurants and bars, but that doesn't mean they're totally shut down.

Some are switching to completely curbside pickup or delivery to keep the lights on and staff employed. Using takeout and delivery services is a safe way to continue supporting local business even during the pandemic.

IS IT SAFE?

According to the FDA, there's no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with the transmission of COVID-19. It might be possible, the agency says, that you can get the virus by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose or maybe eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. If you're still concerned, just wash your hands well after unpacking your food or other items and disposing of the packaging.

THINK BEYOND FOOD

Lots of places besides restaurants are taking a page from their playbook. Book stores, pharmacies, nurseries, toy and game stores, and other businesses are now offering free delivery in their local area, sometimes with a minimum



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order. If you need a product, look for a local business that will deliver it. And with pandemic-driven delays in shipping, local delivery may even beat the big online retailers.

Look to social media posts, business listings, stories in the newspaper or on the television news, and guidance from

local officials to find out what's open and delivering. There may even be a hashtag you can follow like #wereopen or #openin(your city) to get some ideas of businesses to support.

WAIVED FEES

Bear in mind that some

delivery services, like Uber Eats, DoorDash, Bite Squad and others, charge restaurants a fee to deliver their food.

Try to order directly from the business itself, when possible, or use a service that's waived those fees for the pandemic. Grubhub, Uber Eats

and DoorDash are just a few companies that have waived fees in specific localities.

You can always ask the business you're calling if they have to pay a fee for the service. If they do, maybe opt for a curbside option instead, so that the business owner gets to keep more of the money.

Tech Advantage

Zoom meetings, Google Hangouts and FaceTime chats have been around for a while, but with most face-to-face meetings out of the question for a while and many people working from home, they're now coming into their own.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Look at your pre-pandemic calendar. If you had meetings with a financial planner or real estate agent, that meeting may still be on. Many professionals, particularly in service-related industries, are turning to video chats and other tech services to continue doing business in the time of social distancing.

Realtors, for example, are using tech to offer virtual tours and open houses using a variety of videos, touring via FaceTime, live streaming a house tour and more. Spring is typically a hot time for buying and selling houses, and with interest rates at rock bottom, the industry just can't afford to miss out. Vacant properties can also still be shown, provided agents and potential buyers adhere to proper social distancing protocols.

Other professionals that may be offering virtual meetings during this time include financial advisors, bankers, fit-



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ness trainers and more.

TELEMEDICINE

Medical and mental health appointments may still be on, too. Insurance providers, Medicare and Medicaid have rapidly expanded their available covered telehealth services so that people can continue to get treatment so long as providers are available

during the pandemic. Your provider may ask you to do certain things like verbally acknowledge you accept telehealth treatment and showing that you're in a private place, but otherwise, the visit should go much like it would in an office.

Fluffy may also qualify for a telemedicine visit, the FDA says. The agency recently sus-

pended many requirements of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship.

"The FDA recognizes the vital role veterinarians play in protecting public health. This pandemic has had impacts on many of our everyday lives and professions, and during this time, we need to provide veterinarians with the latitude to expand the use of telemedi-

cine in the care of animals," said FDA Commissioner Stephen M. Hahn. "The FDA is providing flexibility that will help veterinarians maintain the health of animals during the pandemic, while allowing for the social distancing that is so important in limiting the further spread of coronavirus disease across the country and world."

Buying a Gift Card

Even with advances in technology, there are some businesses that just can't open.

Beauty salons of all kinds are shuttered, as are a lot of gyms, cleaning services, movie theaters and anywhere else people tend to congregate. Even with the doors closed, though, there are ways you can help.

HOW DOES BUYING A GIFT CARD HELP?

Buying a gift card is a great way to put money in a business owner's hands now that they can use for payroll or bills without having to render the service until later, when the pandemic has passed and they're back on their feet. And, chances are, that's a service you were going to use, anyway, particularly if it's a business you regularly used before COVID-19.

If you already had an appointment with your stylist, your lawncare provider, your massage therapist, your personal trainer or any other service provider that you can no longer meet with, try to give them the tip you would've given them anyway. Many of these providers are independent contractors with little or no safety net during this time.

HOW DO I BUY MY GIFT CARD?

It's a rare business these days that doesn't have social



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media or a website. Contact the business by email or social media message (no one may be around to answer the phone) and ask to purchase a gift card or gift certificate. If you're worried about keeping your information safe, you

can ask to use a trusted app or payment service, such as Venmo or PayPal.

Bonus: Many businesses are offering a little something extra when you buy a card now, like a discount or extra service when you redeem.

NOT JUST THE SERVICE INDUSTRY

Gift cards can help out anywhere, not just in the service industry, and it's a great way to say thank you to those going the extra mile, like health care workers, journalists and first

responders. Or just to get some Christmas shopping done early (first check to make sure how long it will be valid). You can get gift cards to coffee shops, restaurants, movie theaters, clothing stores, all kinds of places.

Look for Creativity

Surviving the pandemic economy is going to take some creative tricks, and that's where a lot of smaller, local businesses have a leg up on the large corporations.

They're more agile and usually more community-oriented, so look for them to come through big in the COVID-19 clutch.

RESTAURANTS

They aren't just doing curbside service of their normal menus. They're selling an entire family meal meant to feed everyone. Or they're selling off things that would normally be used for their sit-down dining — such as paper goods and the ever-elusive toilet paper — along with their regular menus.

Some restaurants are also using their wholesale grocery ties to turn themselves into mini-grocery stores, providing food where there otherwise wouldn't be any. Or they're devoting whole days to turning out products that are tough to find, such as loaves of bread.

BREWERIES AND DISTILLERIES

Both beer and hand sanitizer have one thing in common: alcohol. And though they are



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different types — please don't try to drink hand sanitizer — it can be made with roughly the same equipment.

Some breweries are converting one or more of their production lines to turning out the coronavirus holy grail and offering it for purchase or

giving it away with a purchase of their beer. States, counties and cities are also easing regulations regarding curbside and drive-up purchase of alcohol and cocktails, giving breweries, distilleries and bars a fighting chance at survival.

ONLINE SALES

Business communities are banding together to promote online sales or other activities to responsibly boost business during the pandemic. Tallahassee, Florida, businesses and city officials put on a one-day #rallyfortally, and the

city's Geographic Information System department turned out an interactive map of restaurants serving curbside food. In Laramie County, Wyoming, Visit Cheyenne hosted a social distancing bingo game where local businesses donated prizes.

Be a Walking Billboard

Many local businesses don't have big advertising budgets, and now isn't exactly the time they have extra money to start. You can help support them here in two big ways, however. Keep reading to find out more.

BUY BRANDED MERCH

You've walked past the T-shirts at your favorite coffee shop hundreds of times to pick up your daily latte. Now is the time to buy one and wear it. Not only do shop owners make some money on branded merchandise, but you're also doing some advertising for them. You can let people know they're still doing business by posting their picture on social media or standing in line (6 feet away from everyone else) at the grocery store.

Pro-tip: Merchandise like coffee cups, keychains and shirts also make really neat gifts that show off your civic pride. Buy some now to set aside for Christmas, New Year's, Teacher Appreciation Year 2021 or next Tuesday. Your pick.

POST ON SOCIAL

While people are homeschooling their kids and searching for craft kits to keep them busy, they might be missing

that really cool craft store just down the road. Post pictures of your projects and tag them in it, using #shoplocal or other hashtags trending in your area. It gives the owner a morale boost and bumps up their bottom line. Note: It really doesn't have to be a craft store. Any store would work here.

LOOK FOR THE HELPERS

If you see a business owner doing something exceptional, tell the world. So much of the news is gloomy that it's easy to get depressed. Try looking for the helpers and sending some love their way on social media or by letting a local newspaper or television station know what they're doing. Some examples to look for might be a restaurant providing free meals to medical staff or a brewery handing out hand sanitizer to first responders. Small businesses are community businesses, and chances are, they're out there helping.



Lend a Hand Around Campus

If you live in a town with a school of any kind, but especially a college, you know that some businesses depend on student dollars to make it.

Now, in most places, those students are gone. Those businesses are going to need a lot of help to make it through the longest summer ever.

BOOKSTORES

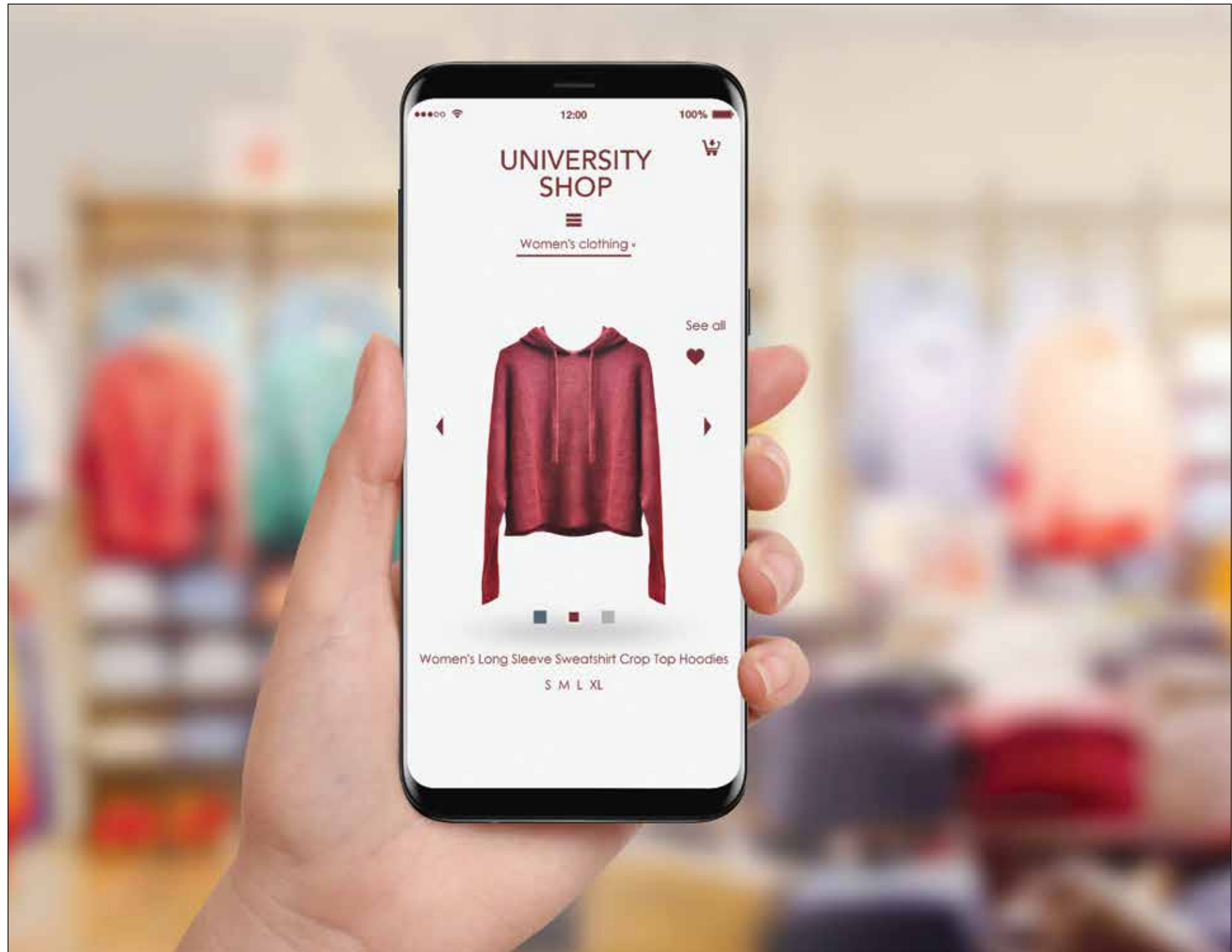
Campus bookstores sell more than just T-shirts and calculus texts. They also have a range of art supplies, gifts, paper goods and other items. Instead of a big-box art store, take a trip over by campus and pick up some paints and brushes to keep the kids busy there.

BRANDED GOODS

Most large colleges and even some high schools have their own apparel shops, either on campus or off, and they're going to be hurting as students are out of school. Drop by and pick up a few gifts for the superfans in your life. There are also usually a few shops that sell custom branded gifts (think about all those Greek tees you see). Now might be a great time to outfit your Little League team for when the season starts back.

BARS AND RESTAURANTS

These guys are really hurting



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without the influx of student dollars that keep them afloat. Make it a priority while you're patronizing your favorite local establishments to try out one or two new spots near campus. Also, many of these places may already have been set up for quick, take-out style or

delivery. All they're lacking is the customer.

COMPUTER AND PHONE SHOPS

In addition to the big-box stores, there are usually local computer or phone shops around campus that cater to

students — meaning low prices and good deals. You might have a child in school who needs a new laptop to finish out their year. A match made in retail heaven.

CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

Campuses usually have a

swarm of clothing boutiques that serve the student population.

While malls are closed and online retailers swamped, maybe head over and make a purchase from one of these local hotspots, or check their websites for promotions.

Volunteer your Time

If you're in good health, have no pre-existing conditions, and local and state regulations allow, consider volunteering your time to helping local businesses. It depends on your area, but some roles you might fill include child care, delivery driver or health care.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Some businesses are counted as essential services and remain open even if others are ordered to shut down. If you're out of work right now, this is a great place to look for a job. You can also volunteer your services. A good place to volunteer would be a place that you love, that is small and is doing something to help others during the pandemic. Arizona Together is an initiative that formed in Arizona to, among other things, pair volunteers with businesses. These volunteers may help in a food warehouse or deliver medications to people who shouldn't leave their homes.

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

Many people can't go to work without a safe place to leave their children. Churches and other organizations are stepping up to fill this gap so



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that people providing essential services, including those on the front line of the pandemic fight, such as doctors and nurses, can continue doing their vital work. The city of Chicago and Sittercity are working to pair experienced child care workers with health care work-

ers who need their services.

TECH HELP

More businesses and consumers are relying on technology more than ever, but most of them lack the experience to set up and run some of the tech they need. If you have the

skills, particularly with video conferencing or streaming, this is a great way to lend a hand. Maybe even remotely, depending on the job.

MANNING SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAILS OR VOICEMAIL

With in-person contact out

of the question, many businesses are dealing with an avalanche of social media messages, emails and voicemails. Lend a hand for a few hours just fielding questions so that your favorite small business owner can get to work doing what they do best.