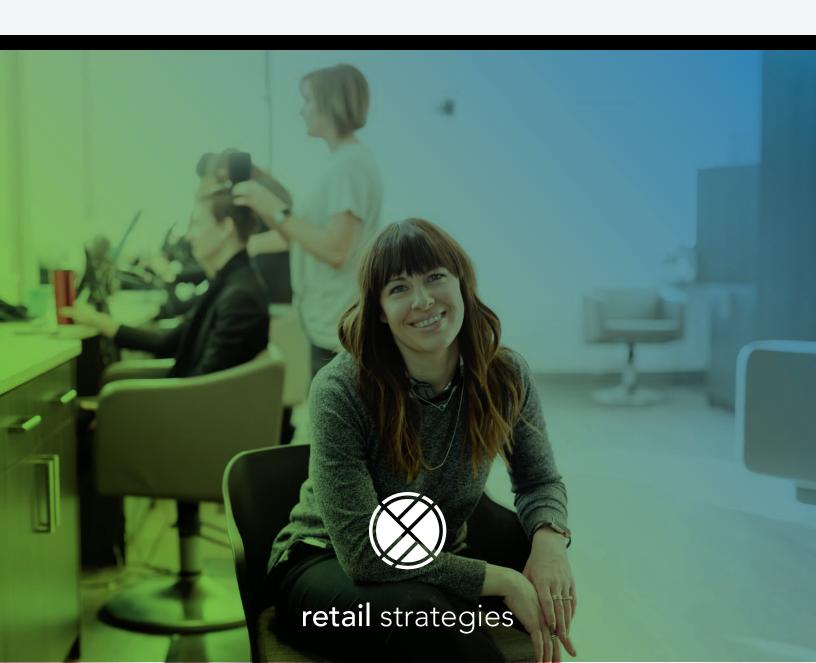
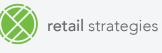


# Ways Cities Can Help Small Businesses





#### NATIONAL IS LOCAL

## Small Business + COVID

COVID-19 has changed the retail and business world in the U.S.and globally, and small businesses have been disproportionately negatively affected. As of March 31, **39%** of America's small businesses were closed compared to January 2020.

Additionally, small business revenue in America was down **33%** in the same time period.

In America, small businesses make up **99%** of all businesses nationwide. They are the heart of communities and represent character and resiliency.





The **good news** is that cities have the unique opportunity, and now the means through the American Rescue Plan, to provide strategic support to their local small businesses and contribute to a revitalized business ecosystem in their downtowns and communities.

In this guide, we outline 4 ways to do just that.

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#### STFP 1

# Training & Tech Assistance:

Provide training and technical assistance to help businesses modernize and get their businesses online.

In April 2020, Main Street America surveyed small businesses nationwide and learned that pre-pandemic, 61% of the United States' small businesses did not have an online presence, making it extremely difficult for them to connect with customers amid restrictions and mandatory shutdowns.

As cities and states lift mandates and restrictions, many businesses have yet to make the jump into the digital space.

To compete with the increase in online shopping, local business owners need the skills and acumen to not only maintain a social media presence but to create an omnichannel retail strategy.

## To Do:

Cities should utilize **3-5%** of their **American Rescue Plan funding** to invest in training, coaching, and technical assistance for business owners to learn this and other modernization techniques such as improved point of sale systems, connecting with restaurant delivery services, and claiming their digital presence in a small setting.



Champion a downtown revitalization plan to create a sustainable ecosystem for small business success.

Economies are changing and because of COVID, the workforce in large metro areas are beginning to rethink their residential options as work from home becomes a more accepted practice. Today, 1 in 5 Americans live in rural communities, and small businesses are the backbone of rural resilience.

Downtown revitalization helps increase small business and entrepreneur access to capital, skills training, and capacity building by creating a built environment that attracts people and serves as a thriving business ecosystem.

Without a plan, it is difficult for cities to know what to do next in their revitalization journey, and often results in missing out on lucrative state and federal grant programs.



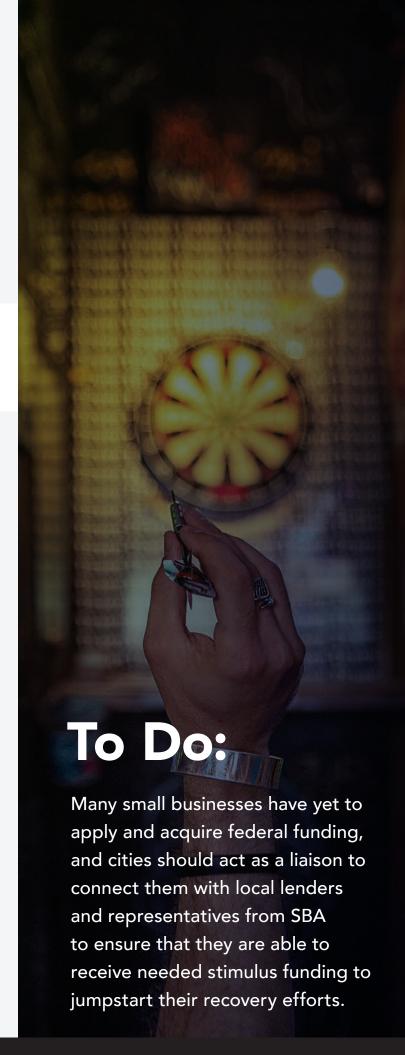
#### STEP 3

## Facilitate Funds

Serve as a facilitator between small businesses and available local, state, and federal aid (PPP).

**\$7.25 billion** in new money for the small business loan program known as Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and will allow more non-profits to apply, including groups that engage in advocacy and some limited lobbying. It also allows larger non-profits to be eligible.

In addition, the Small Business
Administration (SBA) will receive \$25
billion for a new grant program for
"restaurants and other food and drinking
establishments." Grants will be up to
\$10 million per entity and \$5 million per
physical location, with a maximum of 20
locations. The legislation sets aside \$5
billion of the total money to be targeted
to businesses with less than \$500,000 in
revenue in 2019.





#### STEP 4

## Be Flexible

Implement flexible policy in city centers and downtowns to support and encourage outdoor dining and shared spaces for curbside pickup.

Consumers are anxious to get back into social settings and return to life as "normal," however safe social distancing is still top of mind and is likely here to stay. Relaxing regulations regarding temporary patios, sidewalk cafes and outdoor retail expansions so businesses can create more space for their customers in alignment with CDC guidelines is a necessary strategy to support local business owners in their efforts to reconnect with customers and reinvite their patrons back downtown.

# To Do:

To maximize opportunity for businesses to connect with customers and to enhance downtown and city center vitality, cities should identify shared outdoor spaces for "streeteries" and parklets and create a framework for businesses to operate further into the street during scheduled road closures.



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Through a listening campaign that Retail Strategies championed during much of 2020, we heard that municipalities and counties were seeking ways to provide direct assistance to their local businesses.

### small business support

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As a result, we created our customized **Small Business Support** platform that provides live technical assistance, tutorials, data, and coaching directly to the owners and operators of your community businesses and properties.

