KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY AND INFORMED

• Follow the CDC’s 15-day Slow the Spread coronavirus guidelines
• Work from home (if there are barriers, such as lack of technology, please ask your supervisor or board of directors to help accommodate)
• For reliable information on coronavirus itself visit: coronavirus.gov

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

• Connect with partners like your local government, county Emergency Management Office, small business support agencies, local SBA office, banks and chambers – make sure you are all consistent with your messaging and have identified a primary communication lead when it comes to community and business resources
• Utilize all your tools for connecting. Proactively share important info using email, your website, Facebook, Instagram, or however you typically connect.
• Remember that you can pin important posts (like Coronavirus FAQs) to the top of your Facebook Page for quick viewing!

PROVIDE ISOLATION-SAFE OPTIONS FOR CONNECTING WITH BUSINESSES

• Having so many people isolated or working from home means the market is being driven almost entirely online, but it also means customers are checking online often
• Encourage businesses to engage their market on social media (Facebook tends to be local markets, Instagram more regional/global) with online events or special updates
  » Bookstores can hold a FB Live children’s reading hour to help parents with out-of-school kids and remind them online orders are available
  » Restaurants can share behind-the-scenes photos of the kitchen highlighting their heightened hygiene and remind folks about pick-up/delivery options
  » Local food markets can post & pin temporarily reduced hours and any info about special times for vulnerable populations to shop
• Your downtown can promote campaigns to #ShopLocalSafely, including:
  » gift cards
  » pick-up/delivery
  » online ordering
• Host a “Virtual (your town)” website that lists all adapted business offerings and provides easy links or contact information for customers to order
• For information on support for businesses, USA Today’s Rhonda Abrams holds daily FB Live sessions at 10AM (facebook.com/RhondaAbramsSmallBusiness/)

CONDITIONS WILL CHANGE BUT WE CAN ADAPT

• Keep timeframes in mind – current estimates based on China’s experience forecast 45 days until the spread peaks, and Roger Brooks forecasts 90 days of economic slump
• Our local businesses will likely need every effort to bolster sales until June
• Community and customers can’t be overwhelmed or left out of touch; we suggest a 2-week information timeframe for our Main Street organizations as well as businesses
  » Businesses can say they have reduced hours for the next 2 weeks, then revisit/update after 2 weeks whether they’re able to reopen fully or not
  » Let your community know you’ll be working from home 2 weeks, then update
IN THE MOMENT 3/26
BEST PRACTICES: THE SEQUEL

New resources and ideas are springing up every day. Here are some “in the moment” best practices, as gathered from national leaders and fellow Main Street programs:

KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY AND INFORMED
For health and safety updates nationally visit the federal coronavirus website by clicking here and for WA state click here. Main Street America is updating their COVID-19 resource page online frequently, which includes info for you and your businesses.

STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR COMMUNITY
MAKE A MISSION-DRIVEN STRATEGY for dealing with COVID-19! Remind yourself what makes the most sense for your organization. We can’t do everything to solve this crisis but we can continue to be downtown experts and advocates. Olympia Downtown Alliance is focusing on:
1. economic vitality development - for example, hosting online “fireside chats” with business owners or business district agencies
2. promotion campaigns - leverage existing media channels and slogans while incorporating new ones like #shoplocalsafely
3. be an advocate - by communicating the needs of your downtown to decision-makers and keep business in mind in your own decisions

TURN FEEDBACK INTO ACTION like Downtown Bellingham Partnership who heard business owners saying they didn’t have the sales revenue to pay rent to landlords. Knowing that rent should reflect sales (Main Street America suggests a rent to sales ratio of 10%) and that our businesses are seeing a sharp dip, Downtown Bellingham Partnership drafted a letter to all landlords asking for relief.

TRY A PODCAST like Rhode Island Ave Main Street who provides perspective on COVID-19 online here. Or be a guest on a business’s pod!

SURVEY CUSTOMERS in the community by using Google Forms to provide info to businesses like Harrisonburg Downtown Renassaince.

PROVIDE ISOLATION-SAFE OPTIONS FOR CONNECTING WITH BUSINESSES
We’ve seen excellent ideas right here in Washington from you, our Main Street leadership!

TOGETHER WENATCHEE is a virtual marketplace and communication hub making the case for shopping local. This initiative is a volunteer team effort led by Empower Datworks (development and operations), Digital Media Northwest (social media), and Awdience (logo design). It’s a reminder that local businesses want to band together, and may just need this example to spark their own hub! togetherwenatchee.com

DEVOTED TO DAYTON takes the information hub from online out into community. A clear, concise two-sheet printable available from their website it details business hours, what restaurants provide pick-up or delivery, and how to buy giftcards. What’s handy about this low-tech method of connecting is it can be printed & mailed or hung in a business’s windows. Visit the Dayton Downtown Task Force website to view.

TEMPORARY 15MIN PARKING SIGNS may seem unnecessary now that parking options are plentiful, but it’s a strategic beacon that says “Come here to pick-up food or supplies!” Downtown Walla Walla Foundation partnered with the City to put up their own temporary signs - see them going up by clicking here - which gave their local design and print shop some much appreciated business as well.

CONDITIONS WILL CHANGE BUT WE CAN ADAPT
We’ve already moved from social distancing to “stay home, stay healthy” which means more of our shops are closing and our communities are asked to refrain from going outside except for essential activities. What are those? Essential activities permitted under Governor Inslee’s proclamation (click here for full proclamation) are limited to the following:
1. Obtaining necessary supplies and services for family or household members and pets, such as groceries, food and supplies for household consumption and use, supplies and equipment needed to work from home, and products necessary to maintain safety, sanitation and essential maintenance of the home or residence.
2. Engaging in activities essential for the health and safety of family, household members and pets, including things such as seeking medical or behavioral health or emergency services and obtaining medical supplies or medication.
3. Caring for a family member, friend, or pet in another household or residence, and to transport a family member, friend or their pet for essential health and safety activities, and to obtain necessary supplies and services.
4. Engaging in outdoor exercise activities, such as walking, hiking, running or biking, but only if appropriate social distancing practices are used.

KEEP CALM AND MAIN STREET ON!