



## Support in the face of the Unknown

The coronavirus is having an increasingly severe impact on all aspects of our lives, disrupting the way we interact, work, learn, shop, play and recreate. Like many communities around the world, [Burlington has had to cancel numerous events](#), gatherings and recreational activities in an effort to help contain the spread of the virus.

These closures and cancellations, combined with growing apprehension and caution from our residents, make for extremely difficult circumstances for Burlington's small businesses, their owners and employees. Loss of income, orders and foot traffic are already being reported to our office.

Through this uncertainty, please be certain of one thing: Burlington Economic Development is ready to respond. We are experienced economic developers who exist to support our business community and identify resources to address lost income, recovery planning, emergency financing and other issues.

This will not be easy, but we will get through it together.

Of course, disaster recovery is a constantly evolving situation, many specifics of the coronavirus business assistance programs and emergency legislation we are hearing about are still in flux. Please be patient with us as we receive more details.

Our office is providing updated business-specific information from the [Center's for Disease Control](#) (CDC), the [Small Business Administration](#) (SBA), the North Carolina [Small Business Technology Development Center](#) (SBTDC) and more on our webpage, [www.BurlingtonNC.gov/ED](http://www.BurlingtonNC.gov/ED), and our Twitter feed, [@ThinkBurlington](#). Email us at [pbishop@burlingtonnc.gov](mailto:pbishop@burlingtonnc.gov) and call us at 336-222-5147.

Please bookmark these resources and stay tuned to updates from our team. Again, this is an ever-changing situation with new guidance almost daily. Stay tuned!

## **How you can help support Burlington's business community**

*If you are healthy, low-risk and are taking full precautions....do your thing!*

All residents should educate themselves on the basics of the coronavirus and understand individual risks regarding potential exposure, such as avoiding large gatherings, practicing social distancing and regularly washing hands for 20 seconds.

But if you are feeling fine and need some groceries or want to pick up curbside takeout from a local restaurant – go get it. Be smart and cautious, of course!

*If you are staying in, use your computer or phone to shop small and local*

Our local restaurants and delivery services are at the ready to deliver you a fantastic meal right to your doorstep. Wanting to scratch that e-commerce itch while telecommuting from the couch? Be sure to swap Amazon for a local store's website or social media links – delivery is guaranteed to be local, too. If you're not sure about local delivery options, give your business a call!

*Engage with your local businesses - Read their blogs, join their newsletters and follow their social media accounts*

Businesses thrive on engagement with customers to drive sales and keep products and services fresh. Customers likewise get more from their purchases and experiences when they know more about their vendors, products and brands. If you can't be there in person, connect with local companies and build relationships through their online presence.

*Buy gift cards to pay it forward*

The immediate future for sales and new business is very uncertain for many local companies, especially those that rely on customer foot traffic – retail, restaurant, entertainment, hospitality and services. Consider buying gift cards from your favorite small local businesses now, when they need your revenue the most!

## **Businesses - Some things for you to consider if you are staying open**

- Consider offering free delivery or curbside pickup of your items for sale
- Communicate on social media
- Tell your customers how you are keeping surfaces clean and protecting them from coronavirus.
- Post about your daily special available for delivery
- If you have changed your business hours or practices due to the virus, post updated schedules or procedures
- Ensure you have plenty of soap, toilet paper, hand sanitizer or other cleaning products
- Review policies for your business with employees, ensuring everyone is healthy and free from illness prior to work

