

OCTOBER 2020

# ADAPTING FOR WINTER: HOW-TO GUIDE

Supporting Local Restaurants  
Carrying on with Traditions  
Diminishing Social Isolation



**COLORADO**  
Department of Local Affairs  
Division of Local Government





*2020 has been a year unlike any other, and we expect this winter to be more of the same.*

But on the bright side, communities are finding new ways to entice visitors to their downtown when the weather is colder. Residents will be anxious to get out of their homes and participate in safe activities. Through this How-To Guide, we hope you find tips and inspiration that will help your communities make the most of the winter season.

See real-life case studies in the accompanying [The Main Thing](#).

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# SUPPORTING LOCAL RESTAURANTS

BASED ON STEAMBOAT SPRINGS



Restaurants have made a lot of changes in response to the pandemic and safety guidelines. That will only get more complicated this winter as restaurants try to balance the 50% dining room capacities with more to-go orders than usual. Below are ways you can help attract customers to these businesses and educate them on the offerings.

## 1

### STAY IN TOUCH



First and foremost, it is important to stay in close communication with restaurants (and really all your local businesses) to understand what they are experiencing. Host weekly or biweekly calls to see how they are doing and to offer assistance. Continue to supply any ideas or resources that could make their work a little easier, even if they are not always able to act on them.

## 2

### PROMOTE DINING DISCOUNTS

Whether for a limited time, or throughout the whole winter, encourage restaurants to offer discounts or special packages, such as carry-out meals for a whole family. When these discounts are created, be sure to promote them through your Main Street program channels to reach a broader audience, whether a dedicated webpage, through social media, or other venues.

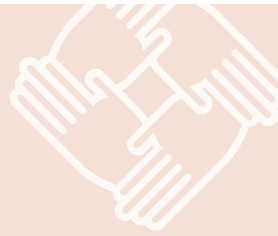




# 3

## BRING THEM TOGETHER

Encourage collaboration and bundled services through your communication with restaurants. Maybe a restaurant, bakery, and liquor store can work together to offer a discounted bundle for dinner, dessert, and wine pairing for two? Are there other complementary businesses that could put their offerings together?



# 4

## TELL THE STORIES

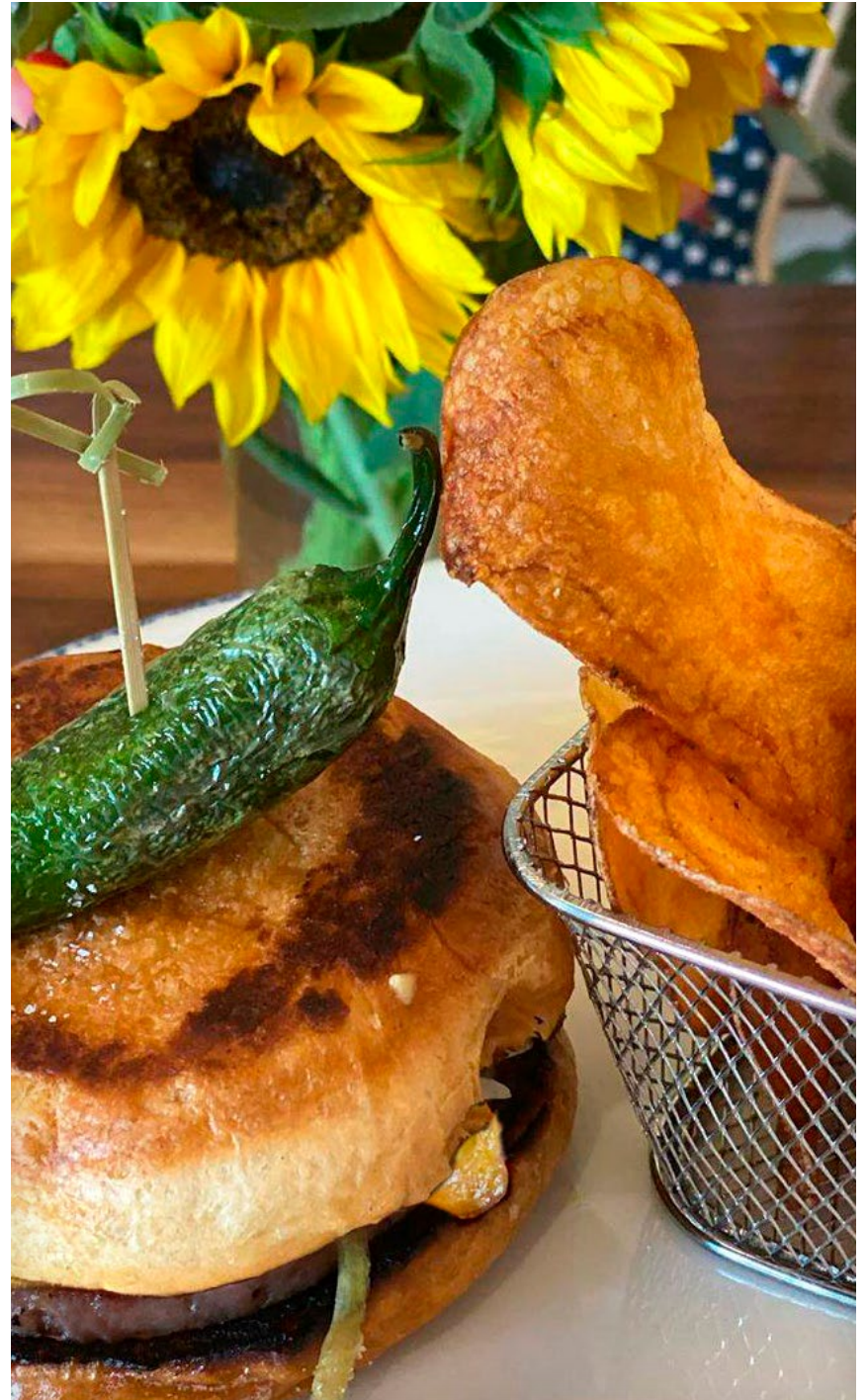
There are sure to be a lot of interesting stories about your local restaurants that will entice customers to visit. Work with the restaurants to learn more about them and share those stories on your social media accounts or other outlets. Adding the human element to a business can help pique the interest of potential customers.



# 5

## GIVE BACK

If possible, work with partners to set up a fund that will support local restaurants and their employees. Your residents will likely be very interested in donating to help their fellow locals.



# CARRYING ON WITH TRADITION

BASED ON GRANBY & LYONS



Many communities have events or other annual traditions that residents look forward to every year – there is probably one that comes to mind for you. In a year with so much uncertainty, it is nice to be able to continue with some of these traditions, even if they look different than usual. Large gatherings may not be possible, but is there another way the tradition’s spirit can still carry on?

## 1

### IDENTIFY THE TRADITION

Start by looking at your community and what types of events or traditions have taken place in the past. Which ones are most popular with locals? Why are these events particularly important to the community and its character?

## 2 BUDGET

After you identify a tradition that will be especially missed if canceled, it is time to see how to make it possible. Start with the budget – how is this event usually funded? Are there any funds available for it this year, even at a smaller scale or in a different format?



## 3 PARTNERS

Gather together the partner organizations that are typically involved in this tradition, and any new partners who you think could help make the event happen. It will be important to leverage all the brainpower to find ways to adapt the event and then pull it off.





# 4

## ADAPTING GATHERINGS



If large gatherings are typically a part of your community tradition, think about ways around having a lot of people together at once. Can the time frame of the tradition be expanded (for example, go from one day to a week so folks have longer to participate in the festivities)? Could spots or time slots be reserved ahead of time to manage the number of people there at once?

# 5

## TAKE IT ONLINE



While the experience is not quite the same, think about if any part of the tradition can be done in the digital world. For example, contests could be conducted online with photos being submitted and voting being done through social media. Encourage participants to work on crafts individually with instructions being shared online or offering kits that people can take home.



# 6 NOTES FOR THE FUTURE



We don't know what the future holds, so this could be a great chance to find new ways to bring the community together. There may be some elements that are a hit, and new traditions could even be born from these adaptations.



*Spooktacular has become a staple in Lyons, and we all need something fun to look forward to this year. We worked hard with our partners to get creative and find ways to still make it happen.*

— Brianna Hoyt, Lyons Main Street

# DIMINISHING SOCIAL ISOLATION

BASED ON LEADVILLE

Colorado is a beautiful place in the winter, but many people in our state experience SAD (seasonal affective disorder) when the weather gets colder and days get longer. As winter really sets in, there will be even fewer opportunities for people to get out and about, especially with current COVID-19 restrictions. If you are concerned about your residents feeling lonely this winter, here are some tips to help diminish the feeling of isolation while also activating your downtown area.

## 1

### BUDGET



Take a look at your budget to determine if there are any funds available to help with these efforts. If resources are limited, that's OK! There are likely some low cost or free opportunities to help get residents out of their homes.

## 2

### PARTNERS

Gather together any partners that might be interested and able to help. Including public health groups is also a good idea, since they have the most knowledge and expertise on this subject.



## 3

### OUTDOOR SPACES

If funds, or partners' funds, are available, look into how outdoor spaces in downtown could be winterized so they could be enjoyed even when it is cold. Heaters, firepits, individual enclosures, tree lights, etc. can make spending time outdoors in the winter more appealing.





## 4 DISCOUNTS & INCENTIVES



Work with downtown businesses to offer incentives or other discounts for people who visit their businesses during the winter. This could be rolled into bundled discounts or “passport” programs that encourage people to patronize multiple businesses to reap the rewards. Social media platforms could also be used to conduct contests or giveaways.



## 5 WARM GIVEAWAYS

Set up booths in your downtown area with free hot chocolate, coffee, etc. for people to enjoy and stay warm while they are visiting local businesses.



## 6 FREQUENT ACTIVITIES OR EVENTS



Even if they are small, can activities be scheduled throughout the winter to draw people to downtown? This could be anything from holiday light viewing to craft or skill demonstrations held outside. These short outdoor activities could allow people to spread out or filter in and out at their leisure to follow guidelines around gatherings.



*While these times may require us to be physically distant, our Main Streets are working hard to ensure that we can still socialize safely in the hearts of our communities.*

— Traci Stoffel, **Colorado Main Street Program**