

JANUARY 2021

# BUILDING CONNECTIONS HOW-TO GUIDE

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Encourage Community  
Participation

Connect with Business Owners

Partner with Other  
Organizations



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



*It takes a village to stimulate investment and participation in supporting local businesses' needs and the community they serve.*

Although we're hopeful that 2021 will bring about the change we so desperately need, for now, many of us are still operating at a distance. But building connections with each other, our local governments, and businesses are arguably more important than ever. In this how-to guide, we hope you will find the inspiration to strengthen connections within your community.

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

## IN THIS GUIDE

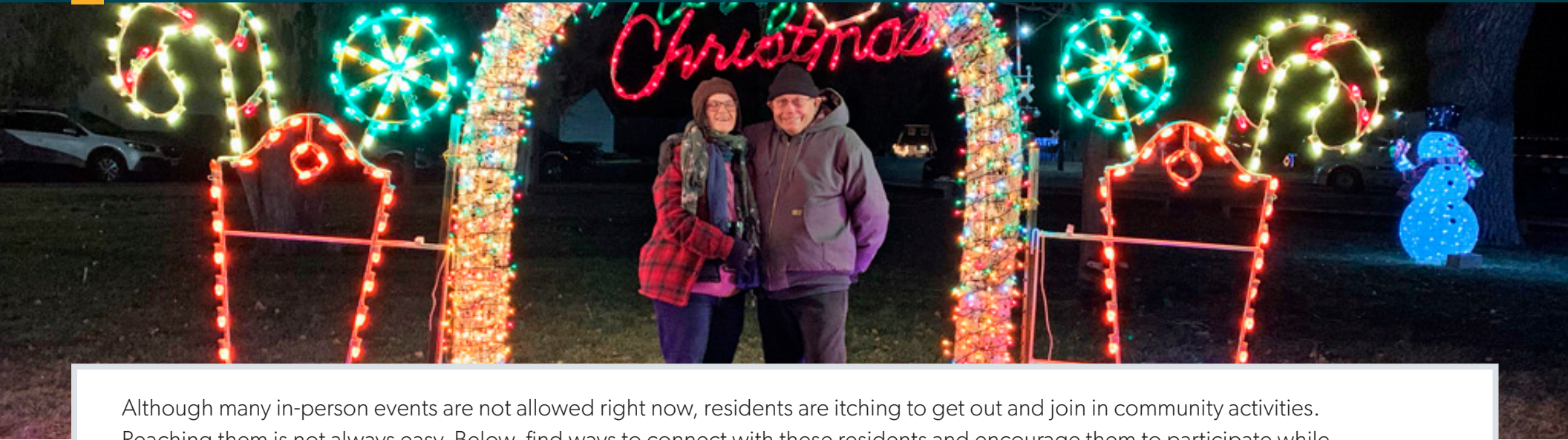
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# ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

BASED ON HUGO



Although many in-person events are not allowed right now, residents are itching to get out and join in community activities. Reaching them is not always easy. Below, find ways to connect with these residents and encourage them to participate while also promoting unity and togetherness.

## 1

### PROVIDE A PURPOSE

Many people are more than willing to donate what they can, but they like giving to a specific cause. State precisely what the goal is and what any donations will go towards.



## 2

### CONNECT VIRTUALLY

Provide ways for the community to gather virtually. Whether drive through events, neighborhood contests, local scavenger hunts, or virtual showings, be creative! Be proactive and meet your community members where they are.



# 3

## LISTEN

Many people are already having conversations on social media – take time to find these conversations and join in. Listen to what they are saying and respond.



# 4

## IDENTIFY NEEDS

How are your residents feeling? Is there a particular community celebration or activity that they are missing out on this year? Listen to what they need and then strive to fill those gaps.



# 5

## COMMUNITY PRIDE

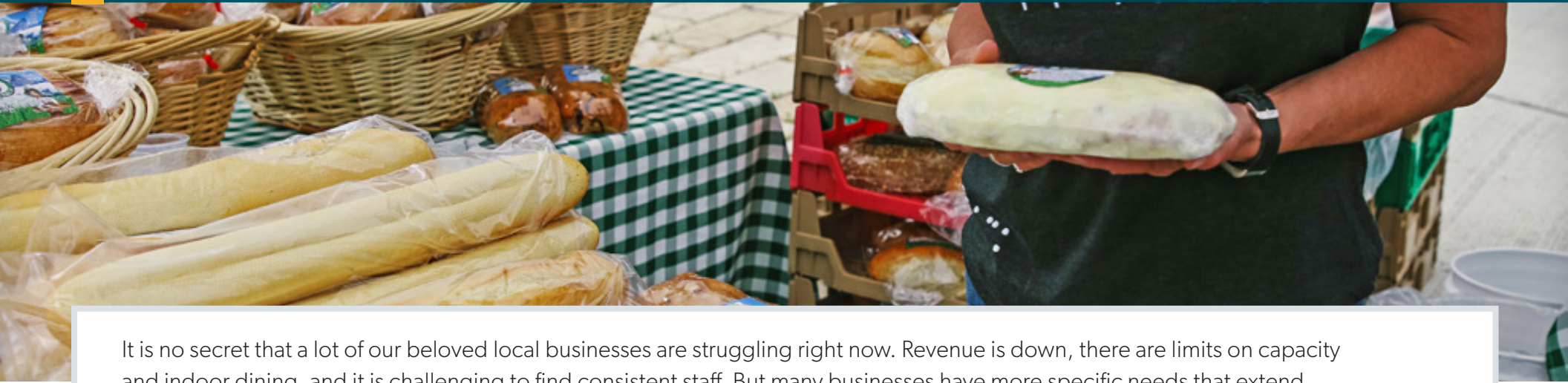
Promote community pride amongst residents. How is your town known? What is a unique part of your history? Help people remember where they come from and why they should take pride in it, such as Hugo's Prairie Yuletide event, which emphasized their pioneering heritage, something community members are very proud of.





# CONNECT WITH BUSINESS OWNERS

BASED ON STEAMBOAT SPRINGS



It is no secret that a lot of our beloved local businesses are struggling right now. Revenue is down, there are limits on capacity and indoor dining, and it is challenging to find consistent staff. But many businesses have more specific needs that extend beyond these everyday struggles.

## 1

### GET YOUR BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Start by taking stock of your community and the different people who are part of it. What stories have you heard from fellow residents? Are there patterns about who is struggling during this time (young children, seniors, families, etc.)? You likely have a good sense of what is happening in town through your role.



## 2

### CHECK-IN

Needs can change over time. Check-in with business owners when state mandates change, after they have been provided with new resources, or other changes occur.





# 3

## PROVIDE RESOURCES

Just because you have made resources available to business owners does not mean that they have the capability of getting them. Bring resources to the businesses. In Steamboat, the Main Street manager delivered PPE to each business to take just one thing off their plates.



# 4

## RALLY THE COMMUNITY

Most Coloradans are passionate about their communities and want to support them in any way that they can. But they need to know what to support – make it easy to find information to help.



# 5 MAKE CONNECTIONS

Are there businesses that could benefit from a partnership with each other? Make sure your local business owners are taking advantage of what is available. Help them to receive the full benefits of governmental assistance and connect them with others who can help. In Steamboat Springs, the local banks made sure each business received their full benefits of the PPP loan.





# PARTNER WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

BASED ON **ELIZABETH AND MEEKER**



“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” As the saying goes, working as a team will often provide better results. Partnering with local governments can often accomplish much more. But what is the best way to approach these organizations with new ideas?

## 1

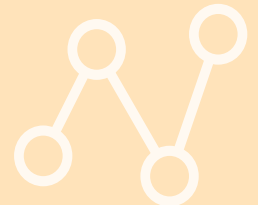
### FIND A BUDGET



Understanding how changes to ordinances will affect municipal budgets is essential. Think about impacts now and into the future.

## 2

### ESTABLISH A TIMELINE



Approach boards and elected officials with specific deadlines and timelines. Let them know why things need to be accomplished by a certain date and why that will benefit them and the local businesses.

# 3

## IDENTIFY THE BIG PICTURE



Plans to benefit local businesses will benefit the community as a whole. Identify the correlation and provide specific ways for the city to benefit, such as increased revenue, further development, or curb appeal.

# 4

## DEFINE GOALS

What are your municipality's current goals, and how will your partnership help reach those goals? Show how a partnership will be beneficial for all parties involved.



# 5

## KEEP IT SIMPLE



Make it clear what you need from the organization to which you are making the appeal. State the work that you will do to complete the project and what assistance you need.

