



COVID-19
Supporting Local Business
April 3, 5 p.m.

Edmonton

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS AND ORGANIZATIONS DURING COVID-19

COVID-19 has many people concerned about their friends, family, and other loved ones, as well as the larger effects the pandemic is having on their neighbours and communities. You may experience a need to reach out and help others, but may not know where or how to start. During this time there is an opportunity to get inspired and commit to some simple acts of kindness to support the community. Here is a list of things you can do to help:

Check in on neighbours

Although necessary, social distancing can be lonely whether people live alone or with others. We all may have neighbours who might appreciate some support. The elderly, newcomers, single parents or just about anyone could be struggling during this time. If you feel comfortable going out, considering knocking on the door of your neighbours and chatting to them through the glass or screen door (while maintaining a physical distance of 2 meters) to offer support and comfort. If you have their numbers, try texting, phoning, emailing, or doing live video check-ins. If you are healthy and willing, consider buying groceries (ensuring you do doorstep drop-off) for neighbours to help them ride out their self isolation.

Reach out to people who are in self isolation.

Don't forget about the people you know who may be in self isolation. Send funny memes or GIFs to cheer them up. Call them or video chat with them. Help them feel less alone and that they have support.

Support local businesses

The COVID-19 pandemic will impact some businesses more than others. Small businesses are most likely to be hit hardest. Here is a [good resource](#) to find which of your favourite local stores are still open for business.

Shop local: online or call-in

Some businesses are closed to customers but may provide pick up and/or delivery options. Inquire with your favourite place to shop, and see what options they have for purchasing during this time.

Order out

Order food from restaurants that still offer pick-up and/or delivery service.

Buy a gift card

If you have the means to, consider buying an online gift card to one or more of your favourite local small businesses. Not only does this show a gesture of loyalty, it will provide immediate infusion of cash to the business(es) to help them make it through this hard time.

Use your voice and advocate for individuals, businesses and organizations that need help.

Share positive news and acts of kindness with your community

There are many examples of people helping each other. Share and talk about them. Together we can prevent getting caught in a bad news spiral. Then, spread the word with your online community about how you're making a difference. You can find these stories on Twitter searching #yegcares or #edmontoncares

Be kind and say thank you

During stressful times, it can sometimes be hard to see the good in people. Being kind and compassionate will go a long way. Grocery store employees, delivery personnel and especially medical professionals are exhausted. They are dealing with the public during a very chaotic and tense time. Showing patience, understanding and courtesy can make a world of difference and brighten someone's day. Say thank you to all the essential service workers you come across in your day.

Give a shout out online

Reviews can have huge impacts on a business. If you have a good experience to share, take a few minutes and leave your favourite small business a review and post it proudly. Reviews can have huge impacts on people as well. If you experienced or noticed a good deed, take a few minutes and post it proudly on social media to spread goodwill and love.

Donate to nonprofits helping to respond to COVID-19

Nonprofits are struggling to meet clients' needs as the COVID-19 pandemic has forced layoffs, reduced services and school closures. The organizations are facing increased demand while having to cancel crucial fundraising events at the same time. If you are in a position to do so, consider making a donation to directly help with these valuable organizations. Below are just some of the non-profit organizations asking for donations at this time.

Bissell Centre and Boyle Street Community Services

With the support of government agencies, [Boyle Street](#) and [Bissell Centre](#) are able to help Edmontonians experiencing vulnerability who are affected by COVID-19 at the Edmonton Expo Isolation Shelter. However,

there is a critical gap that must be filled - acquiring essential clothing items needed to ensure the dignity and safety of everyone involved. Due to the inability to receive clothing donations from the public, the Bissell Centre has started a [drive](#) for financial donations to purchase clothing for those in need at the EXPO Centre.

The Mustard Seed

The [Mustard Seed](#) is a safe and supportive place where people experiencing problems associated with poverty and homelessness can have their physical needs met in the short term, but also begin to heal and grow mentally, emotionally, and spiritually for a better life down the road.

United Way

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, [United Way](#) is leading efforts in collaboration with their partners to help the community overcome the emerging challenges that the outbreak is causing. They are committed to rallying organizations and caring members of the community together to find the most effective ways of serving people who are vulnerable. Many people could not afford to adequately prepare for how COVID-19 is affecting their family. Many do not have support, should there be a need for them to self-isolate. Those who already face barriers - poverty, food insecurity, social isolation - need even more help during this time. So as you protect your family and those closest to you to keep them healthy, think of those who may need additional help.

Meals on Wheels

Edmonton [Meals on Wheels](#) is a local nonprofit and registered charitable organization providing home-delivered meal and food services to a diverse mix of people. They are well known for quality customer service, and excellent meals. Their resources are currently focused on serving Edmonton's home bound, isolated and most vulnerable populations.

Volunteer

Volunteer for organizations providing critical services in your community

Reach out to the charities you regularly support and ask how you can continue to support them with your time, keeping safety in mind. Search for other volunteer opportunities in your area as there may be some things you can do safely from home. Nonprofits are making adjustments to help keep volunteers safe - for example, meal delivery services may be moving to a doorstep delivery instead of bringing it inside. Due to health and safety considerations, many regular volunteers may need to restrict their usual commitments in the coming weeks and months and this will leave nonprofits shorthanded. However, needs will continue to rise and demand will likely increase for food pantries and other services, increasing the need for volunteer time to deliver. You can find some volunteer opportunities listed on the [Volunteer Connector](#) website.

Foster a homeless pet.

If you have been thinking about fostering a pet, now is a great time. Many animal rescue organizations are asking for fosters as current volunteers are increasingly staying home and self-isolating. Fostering an animal will not only help free up space for another animal, but is a rewarding experience that will allow you to experience companionship on a temporary basis in this time of social distancing. Animals cannot get or give someone COVID-19.