



**Armondo Pavone** Mayor

March 30, 2020

Dear Renton Business Owners:

These are trying times that we are experiencing. For many of you, this means a complete and sudden loss of business. For some, this means adapting your business on the fly in order to comply with the various public safety orders issued to manage this pandemic. All of us are facing uncertainty about when life, along with our business, will return to some semblance of normal. As a small restaurant owner myself, we have had to reduce staff and shift to a take-out model during these times.

During my three months as Mayor, I have learned that the City can take certain actions to assist small businesses, and then there are actions that are the responsibility of the State and Federal governments. Several financial resources from the State and Federal governments are available to business as part of the Families First and CARES Act federal legislation recently adopted by Congress. One of my goals is to make sure that you know where and how to access those resources.

One goal is to provide a gateway for you to find these resources, so the City is providing assistance and locating other useful resources online at [whyrenton.com](https://whyrenton.com), including but not limited to:

- **Grants and loans:** State and federal grants and loans from large companies are available for some small businesses. <https://whyrenton.com/covid-19-resource-guide/>
- **Documenting business impacts:** Business owners are encouraged to complete the economic impact survey at <https://www.greater-seattle.com/en/economic-impact-survey/>

These resources are going to be the best location for you as a small business owner to begin to access potential financial resources through the national and state programs.

In addition to helping businesses access these federal and state resources, there are several items within the City's control you might be able to take advantage of. These include:

- **Tax deferrals:** B&O, Utility and Gambling Tax returns due March 31, 2020 through May 31, 2020 may be eligible for a deferral until June 30, 2020. Please see our website <https://rentonwa.gov/taxandlicense> for additional information. While we encourage businesses to file their tax returns if they are able, this option is available.

- **Waived fees:** A-frames and signage fees are waived to make it easier for customers to pick-up takeout items from the businesses who remain open.
- **Partnering with Startup425:** Offering Startup425 Foundation Series for entrepreneurs spring seminar classes online starting April 1.
- **Temporary Waste Service Reduction:** If your business has been temporarily closed due to the Governor's Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, you may contact Republic Services for a temporary reduction in garbage service to the minimum level of service—currently a 20-gallon cart service. Your custom account will reflect a credit for the pro-rated difference between the rate for the service subscribed during normal business operations and the minimum level of service during the temporary business closure. Please contact Republic Services Customer Service at 206-777-6440 to make your arrangements. Republic Services customer service staff will provide any further instructions.

One of the challenges that we face as a local government is that the State Constitution prohibits the gifting of funds (grants) and the lending of credit (e.g., small business loans) with local taxes. Therefore, there are real limits on what the City can do in this area. Where opportunities exist, we have taken action as a City in an effort to assist our small businesses to get through these immediate hard times.

Additionally, the City has made multiple special outreach efforts to keep our business community informed. These outreaches include:

- **Targeted newsletters to all Renton businesses:** Providing information about the changing business climate and offering resources to help weather its effects.  
<https://mailchi.mp/d5a707229a93/covid-19-renton-business-resources>  
<https://mailchi.mp/9607251ba755/keeping-your-renton-business-healthy>
- **Enhanced social media outreach:** Reaching out to businesses and citizens to encourage local patronage.
- **Resources for arts and cultural organizations and artists:** Reaching out to the arts community through the Arts Commission mail serve and Facebook group to provide resources and connections to assistance programs.  
<https://mailchi.mp/fe6deaf59d75/public-art-in-renton-march-2019-updates-from-rmac-12227938>
- **New Facebook page for Renton business owners:** Created a place where SCORE, WA Department of Commerce, Startup425 partners, the Renton Chamber and the City can post relevant resources.  
<https://www.facebook.com/RentonBusiness/>



- **New Facebook group, Renton Rising:** Provides a platform for Business-to-Business conversation to address concerns, new ideas and helpful tips and tricks.
- **Coordination of efforts:** Working closely with our neighboring communities, Renton Chamber of Commerce, and partner agencies at the County, State and Federal levels to provide timely, accurate business information and access to resources. Renton Chamber of Commerce has been actively engaging their members with COVID-19 updates, informative newsletters and other support services. You can access their website at [gorenton.com](http://gorenton.com)
- **Supporting efforts to Shop Local Safely:** Providing regular updates on businesses that are open for takeout and delivery; options to purchase gift cards, place orders online and take virtual classes through [rentondowntown.com](http://rentondowntown.com) and [visitrentonwa.com](http://visitrentonwa.com); and promotions on Facebook and featured posts.

I know this is a tremendously challenging time for all small business. It is my sincere hope that all of our small businesses will get through this calamity and be able to start up again as we return to a more normal business climate. Until then, the City will continue to offer these resources and seek opportunities to assist you. Please stay connected with our City's economic development team via email at [thrive@rentonwa.gov](mailto:thrive@rentonwa.gov). They are professionals that can assist you in navigating the maze of federal regulations and programs that you may encounter.

Lastly, take care of yourself as best as you can. These are highly stressful times, but we will get through them. If you need help, reach out to those resources that may be available to you. You are a critical part of what makes the Renton business community particularly vibrant during normal times. I want to see you remain part of this vital community.

Kindest regards,



Armondo Pavone  
Mayor

AP:aa

cc: Renton City Council  
Robert Harrison, CAO  
C. E. "Chip" Vincent, CED Administrator  
Cliff Long, Economic Development Director

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