

# New Dream Community Action Kit

## Guide to Going Local

Building stronger, healthier,  
and more vibrant  
communities

Produced in partnership with



### CONTENTS

#### INTRODUCTION

**Why Local Matters** Page 1

**ACTION IDEA #1 Build Pride in Your Local Place** Page 2

**ACTION IDEA #2 Foster Local (and Green) Entrepreneurship** Page 5

**ACTION IDEA #3 Buy Local (and Sustainable)** Page 8

**ACTION IDEA #4 Invest Locally** Page 11

**Want to Learn More?** Page 14

**About This Guide** Page 15



# Why Local Matters

We say we want vibrant local economies, healthy neighborhoods and downtown areas, and less sprawl into our outlying green spaces—but we don’t always support the existing local options that will help us realize this vision.

## Why does “going local” matter?

It’s about:

- Building communities that are **healthier** and **more sustainable**, supported by local economies that are **stronger** and **more resilient**;
- Keeping **money local** and **communities vibrant**;
- Using **local and regional resources** to meet our needs, not being dependent on resources shipped from halfway across the globe;
- **Reconnecting** eaters with **farmers**, investors with **entrepreneurs**, and business owners with the **communities** and **natural places** on which they depend;
- Creating more **high-quality local jobs**—for our neighbors, our families, and ourselves; and
- Recognizing that we can’t just “do it alone” and that, in the end, **we’re all better off when we’re all better off.**

We need to invest in communities that celebrate a more comprehensive vision of happiness and prosperity, where all people have the resources and opportunities they need to engage their minds, nourish their bodies, nurture their families, support their neighbors, and protect their environment. But even as we focus on our own communities, it’s important for us to recognize our broader role in crafting a larger, global network of cooperatively interlinked and sustainable local economies.

As individuals and as communities, we have tremendous power to change the way our economy operates. By working collaboratively and sharing resources, we can come together to build vibrant and supportive local economies—where we can share our skills and talents, get our needs met, and focus on what really matters in life. In this *Guide to Going Local*, we invite you to explore our action ideas, informative videos, and practical tips to get started!



‘Shop Local’ Wednesday in Boston’s South End. PHOTO: JUSTINE BORST

## Redefining the Dream:

Creating Real Prosperity for All

### FALSE PROSPERITY

Consolidated, distant ownership

Dependent, volatile

Impersonal, hidden, complex

Short-term return and risk

Dollars leave the local economy, benefit only few

Homogenized, loss of heritage

Destructive, stressful, fearful

### REAL PROSPERITY

Diverse, local ownership

Self-sufficient, resilient

Personal, transparent, direct

Long-term growth and success

Dollars stay in the local economy, improve quality of life for all

Unique culture, pride of place

Sustainable, healthy, joyful

# Why Local Matters

PHOTO: LOCAL FIRST LA PLATA COUNTY



## Did You Know...

- In a 2012 national poll, respondents said that *having locally owned businesses nearby is the #1 factor* in creating an ideal community.
- A 2011 *study* found that “counties with a vibrant small-business sector have lower rates of mortality and a lower prevalence of obesity and diabetes” than counties without one.
- Studies of both *agricultural* and *manufacturing* communities found that places with a diversity of small-scale enterprises had higher levels of civic participation and better social outcomes than those dominated by a few outside corporations.
- Each dollar spent at a local, independent merchant generates up to four times as much wealth in the local economy as a dollar spent at a chain-owned business, due to the local *multiplier effect*.
- Local retailers and distributors are not only more likely than chains to hire locally, but they carry a *higher percentage of locally produced goods*.
- Farmers who sell items locally tend to be *smaller scale and can more feasibly adopt environmentally beneficial practices* such as growing diverse crops, planting cover crops, leaving habitat buffers for native biodiversity, and integrating crop and livestock production.
- Research shows that urban residents who have local contact with nature in parks, nature reserves, and other everyday settings experience *less stress and better health outcomes* than those who do not.

## Measuring Well-Being Locally

In the United States and around the world, communities are embracing alternatives to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to measure local progress in a less monetary way. Examples of these alternative metrics include the *Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI)*, the *Well-Being Index*, Bhutan’s *Gross National Happiness Index*, the ICLEI *STAR Communities Index*, and the *Happiness Initiative*.

Several U.S. states, including *Maryland* and *Vermont*, have formally adopted the GPI as a measure of state well-being and have begun to integrate it into their legislative processes.

For more information, read the Demos report *Beyond GDP* and watch this video on *Maryland’s GPI*. Also, use the State of Maryland’s *GPI calculator* to learn how changes you make in your home, property, and community could improve overall state well-being.



IMAGE: GALLUP-HEALTHWAYS WELL-BEING INDEX®

# Build Pride in Your Local Place

**N**o one wants to live in *Anywhere, USA*. Part of what keeps a community thriving—economically and otherwise—is its ability to maintain (and celebrate!) a vibrant local identity. This includes having a strong sense of place and being aware of and taking pride in your community’s history, cultural traditions, and unique natural environment. It also means supporting parks, squares, and other public spaces where people can gather to enjoy the community as friends, neighbors, and citizens.

## IDEAS & INSPIRATIONS

Looking for ways to reconnect with your locality and create a stronger sense of place?

### Celebrate what makes your place special

by emphasizing features like ethnic communities, historical and cultural events, famous former residents, former uses of buildings, unique natural features and parks, etc. See [▶ The National Trust Main Street Center](#), [▶ Mapping Main Street](#), and [▶ Project for Public Spaces](#).

**Engage your neighbors and build community** through neighborhood walks, potlucks, and other participatory events. See [▶ Jane’s Walk](#), [▶ The Big Lunch](#), and [▶ Neighborland](#).

**Encourage participation in local nature appreciation and education events**, like hikes, naturalist tours, and talks about local ecosystems, watersheds, etc. To learn about your ecoregion, see the Nature Conservancy’s [▶ Terrestrial Ecosystems map](#) and WWF’s [▶ Global Ecoregions](#). Find a nearby park at [▶ America’s State Parks](#) and [▶ U.S. National Park Service](#).

**Tell local stories through creative storytelling, festivals, and the performance arts.** See Georgia’s folk-life play [▶ Swamp Gravy](#), Utah’s [▶ The Porch](#), the [▶ Four Corners Storytelling Festival](#), Andersonville in Chicago’s [▶ Midsommarfest](#), the [▶ National Storytelling Network](#), and Hanson Hosein’s book [▶ Storyteller Uprising](#).

**Profile and support local artists and musicians.** See Flagstaff’s [▶ First Friday ArtWalk](#), Buffalo’s [▶ Indie Sound Festival](#), [▶ Listen Local First](#) in D.C., and Newark’s [▶ Lincoln Park Arts & Music Festival](#).



Local First’s *Be Local Coupon Book*, La Plata County, Colorado. PHOTO: LOCAL FIRST LA PLATA COUNTY

**Create a “local flavor” or music video** to highlight what’s special about your community and to foster pride in your place. See [▶ Denver Local Flavor Guides and videos](#), [▶ The Grand Rapids \(MI\) LipDub](#), [▶ My City \(Fort Wayne, IN\)](#), and [▶ Detroit “On a Good Day.”](#) (See also our short video, below, and “Step-by-Step,” pages 4–5.)

**Host a community mural project, drawing contest for kids, or public art competition.** See [▶ Open Walls Baltimore](#), [▶ Grand Rapids Art Prize competition](#), and [▶ Philadelphia Public Art](#).

**Encourage “staycations” or tourism by locals** to help people rediscover the fun of their place, from local science museums to historical landmarks. See Arizona’s [▶ Weekend Zona](#) videos, [▶ Staycationidea.com](#), and the app [▶ AllTrails.com](#).

**Host local award ceremonies** to show support for “best” businesses, volunteers, murals, etc. See [▶ Oakland Indie Awards](#) and Grand Rapids’ [▶ LocalMotion Awards](#).

**Start a “placemaking” process** to develop and invigorate public spaces in your community, whether it’s a public square or a vacant lot. See [▶ What Is Placemaking?](#), City Repair’s [▶ Placemaking Guidebook](#), [▶ The Power of 10](#), or browse through [▶ Great Public Spaces](#).

**Get creative and be stealthy!** Find great ideas for guerilla gardening, weed bombing, ad-busting, transforming pavement-to-parks, and more in the guide to [▶ Tactical Urbanism](#).

**Watch VIDEO**

**Click PLAY** to see examples of how communities around the country have used video to highlight what’s special about them.

STEP BY STEP

# Using Video to Create Local Pride

Unique Places + Inspiring People + A Video Camera = A Local Pride Video

## What is a local pride video?

In today's age of viral media, video can be an effective way to showcase the unique people and places in your community, instilling local pride at a time when many economies are struggling and communities are eroding.

Video can be cinematic, visual, and exciting, giving residents new insight into the landmarks and individuals they pass by every day. Video can highlight the talent of local musicians and artists as well as the unique neighborhoods, locally owned shops, and restaurants that are not found anywhere else. It can be a particularly effective tool for engaging and connecting young people, showcasing a community's abundance of bright and inventive youth and helping young people realize that their hometown is worth investing their time and energy in.

Ft. Wayne, IN video My City, created by A Better Fort



## Key Steps

### STEP 1 Develop your story.

**1** Think about why you want to make the video. Do you want to raise awareness about local diversity, businesses, or the arts? Highlight community history and connections? Unite people around a cause? Once you've agreed on the goal, identify specific local businesses and "hidden gems" and consider the key characters you'd like to profile, whether it's local celebrities or everyday folks. Try to tie their stories (or the lyrics, if you're doing a music video) into a broader local or national conversation, such as about economic revival, community rebirth, etc. Consider doing a focus group or a survey asking people what they like most about where they live.

### STEP 2 Choose a video format.

**2** Local pride videos can take many forms: music videos, interviews/short documentaries, show-and-tell with a host, scripted/acted out, slideshows, etc. Whatever format you choose, your video will be more compelling to the community if you tell a good story, showcase people and places that are familiar, and use catchy (even local) music. Examples include:

- **Grand Rapids, MI**, produced a *Lip Dub* music video—featuring over 5,000 local celebrities, athletes, moms, business people, etc. lip syncing to the song "American Pie"—as a community outpouring in response to a national ranking that called Grand Rapids a dying city.
- **Denver, CO's Local Flavor** video series explores unique aspects of the city's neighborhoods and features interviews with local businesses, from coffee shops to tattoo parlors.
- **Ft. Wayne, IN**, created the collaborative hip hop video "*My City*"—featuring more than a dozen local artists and shot at local landmarks and businesses—as a way to foster local pride in young people and to retain talent and create positive change in the city.
- **Memphis, TN's Soundtrack Project** features original music from the Memphis Symphony Orchestra and uses multimedia storytelling to give voice to local businesses, from microbreweries to dog groomers.
- **New York City** uses video to communicate local planning and development issues; in one *video*, a New Yorker talks about why she enjoys shopping at the Essex Street Market.
- **Detroit, MI's video "On a Good Day"** spotlights the Georgia Street Community Collective's efforts to turn wastelands into urban farms and community gardens, providing a moving story of community renewal.

"Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being."

—Project for Public Spaces

STEP BY STEP

# Using Video to Create Local Pride

Unique Places + Inspiring People + A Video Camera = A Local Pride Video

**STEP 3 Identify partners and divvy up tasks.**

Decide whether you want to do the video on your own or to partner with others. Use social networking and local channels to find people or groups who are excited about the project, whether nonprofits or neighborhood associations, local government or businesses, local artists, or just a group of do-gooders. Remember, it's not just the final product, but the entire process of creating the video that's important in uniting people around a common goal.

**STEP 4 Develop a rough budget/timeline and find support.**

Video doesn't have to be expensive, but it can be time consuming, so it's important to develop a budget and timeline to work from. To bring down costs, seek out sponsorships and donations of everything from video production to food for the crew. Put out a call for "extras," film students, or other volunteers to lend a hand. Your video project can be big or small, but the more complex it is, the more serious your production has to be.

**STEP 5 Find a videographer**

Find a videographer who is willing to volunteer time or offer a reduced rate. If you can't afford a professional, find a tech-savvy volunteer or friend, or just do it yourself! Identify what kind of equipment you'll need: for a simple web video that will be posted online, a Flip or phone camera might work fine. If you want to go professional, make sure you find the right camera and crew.



Grand Rapids, MI lip dub video, created by Rob Bliss

**STEP 6 Shoot the video.**

Plan out your shots, be as prepared as you can, and rehearse if needed. Give a heads up to local residents or businesses at the locations you'll be filming, and if necessary arrange times that work best for them. If you aren't working with an experienced camera person, get tips from free [video tutorials](#). Also, it's good to obtain appearance

waivers from everyone who appears in the video.

**STEP 7 Edit the video.**

Once the filming is done, the hard work of editing begins, taking anywhere from a week to several months. Ideally, editing should be done by a professional or video-savvy volunteer, but it's possible to do it yourself using free software like [iMovie](#) or [Movie Maker](#). Editing takes a long time, so solicit lots of feedback and don't get frustrated if the process seems to be going slowly.

"What's so powerful about the [Grand Rapids, MI, [LipDub](#)] is that, in less than 10 minutes, you get a slice of life and a flavor of the city that leaves a lasting impression. As you watch it, you say to yourself, 'These look like great people. They'd make great neighbors. I'd like to live there.'"

—Glen Gilmore, former mayor of Hamilton, New Jersey.

"The goal of the [Ft. Wayne, IN, "[My City](#)"] project is to turn these perceptions that we all have about our hometowns on their head... and to always surprise people by what's just lurking here. Especially young people, to show them what they never knew existed."

—Kelly Lynch of Lynchpin Creative, producer of the Ft. Wayne, IN, hip hop video "[My City](#)."

**STEP 8 Create buzz.**

In advance of the video's release, pull together a short teaser and publicize the project via social media. Contact local papers to see if they might feature a story or blog about the project. Offer to screen the video at a future community gathering to raise even more awareness about just how special your place really is!

**STEP 9 Release the video.**

Organize a community screening/release party at a locally owned theater or other venue, inviting project participants as well as the media and public. At the event, talk briefly about the wider goals of the project to start a community conversation about some of the issues it raises. Or, forego a physical screening and just post the video online and advertise virtually. If you tell a compelling story and evoke lots of emotion, the video could end up going viral.

**STEP 10 Harness the momentum and start a movement.**

Releasing the video is often just the first step; it's what happens after that can be truly transformative. Ft. Wayne's hip hop video sparked a renewed sense of civic pride and inspired young people to step into leadership roles in shaping the city's future. The video's success also sparked a chain of related initiatives, such as the [My City Summit](#), the [My City Pin](#), and the larger [#MYCITY Movement](#).

# Foster Local (and Green) Entrepreneurship

**A** sure way to strengthen your local economy is by creating an environment where local businesses can thrive, not simply survive.

Many local owners have invested substantial time, energy, and money in their businesses, so they have a natural interest in the long-term health and sustainability of their communities. They are your friends, neighbors, and fellow community members. Through their shops, services, and restaurants, they work to live out their hopes and ideas for making your community great.

You can help your community encourage more local innovation and stimulate a culture of entrepreneurship that not only meets regional social and economic needs, but also supports local heritage and the environment. Around the country, local businesses are moving *away from competition toward collaboration*, working side by side to solve community needs and help each other thrive. Creating a vibrant community and economy is shared work—and fun!

## IDEAS & INSPIRATIONS

Here are some ideas for fostering entrepreneurship in your community:

**Start a local business network** to bring together local businesses, nonprofits, and concerned citizens to support local entrepreneurship. See [▶ BALLE](#) and its nationwide list of [▶ members](#), and the [▶ American Independent Business Alliance \(AMIBA\)](#).

**Encourage local businesses to host other businesses**, such as sponsoring a food truck happy hour outside, serving as a drop-off point for a local [▶ Community Supported Agriculture \(CSA\)](#) program, or featuring local art or music inside. See D.C.'s [▶ Union Kitchen](#), [▶ Whisked! Pie CSA](#), and [▶ Local Music Day](#).

**Hold a local business mixer** where local business owners can come together for a fun, social event to encourage collaboration. See [▶ Local First Arizona's mixers](#).

**Create a hub group or coworking space** where local entrepreneurs, manufacturers, and craftspersons can share resources and ideas. See the [▶ Hub Bay Area](#), [▶ SF Made](#), [▶ Made in Newark](#), and [▶ Etsy Teams](#).

**Support the local repair economy by creating a DIY network, repair café, or fixer's club.** See [▶ Fixer's Collective NYC](#), [▶ West Seattle Fixer's Collective](#), [▶ How to Start a Fixers Collective](#), and [▶ How to Start a Repair Café](#).

**Support innovative green and equitable business models**, such as worker-owned co-ops, community-owned stores, and B Corps. See Cleveland's [▶ Evergreen Cooperatives](#), [▶ How to Start a Worker Coop](#), Oakland's [▶ People's Grocery](#), the Bay Area's [▶ WAGES Cooperative](#), Portland's [▶ Village Market](#), [▶ Community Store in Saranac Lake](#), and [▶ B Corporation](#).

**Start a "pop-up" business incubator** to support the emergence of small retail or mobile businesses in underutilized spaces. See Oakland's [▶ popuphood](#), D.C.'s [▶ Start-up Market](#) and [▶ Food Truck Fiesta](#), the [▶ West Coast Mobile Retail Association](#), and [▶ On the Spot Popups](#). (See also our short video, above, and "Step-by-Step," pages 7–8.)

**Repurpose an empty big-box space** into a civic-minded structure like a library, school, recreation center, museum, food hub, business incubator, or church. See [▶ Big Box Reuse](#).

**Encourage business-to-business green purchasing**, such as buying green energy or office supplies, and **host a local sourcing fair** that brings together local producers and retailers. See the [▶ Responsible Purchasing Network \(RPN\)](#), founded by New Dream.

**Assess your community's potential for localism—and take action!** See BALLE's [▶ Leakage Calculators](#) to assess opportunities for new locally owned businesses or jobs, and BALLE's [▶ Economic Development manual](#) for tips on building the local economy from the ground up.

**Work with local officials to create policies and processes that enable a creative business climate**, including planning and zoning policies that support downtowns, encourage local businesses, and discourage or limit big-box sprawl. See the Institute for Local Self-Reliance's [▶ Independent Business Rules](#) and [▶ Big Box Tool Kit](#); Philadelphia's [▶ Taking Care of Business](#) report; and [▶ National Main Street Center](#).

**Create a sustainable business challenge, award, or certification body** to encourage and recognize businesses that "do the right thing." See Charlotteville's [▶ Better Business Challenge](#), ICLEI USA's [▶ Green Business Challenge](#), Boston's [▶ Greenovate Awards](#), New Orleans' [▶ Green Natties Awards](#), and the Four Corners' [▶ Resource Smart Business Program](#).

**Get inspired to "re-invent" your hometown**, even in the face of seemingly unsurmountable challenges. For inspiration, watch the 17-minute short [▶ Lemonade: Detroit](#).



STEP BY STEP

# Supporting Pop-Up Retail

Vacant Spaces + Local Entrepreneurs + Limited Availability = Pop-Up Retail

## What is pop-up retail?

Through pop-up retail, entrepreneurs, developers, community groups, and others transform vacant storefronts or neglected spaces into temporary shops or marketplaces as a way to support local small businesses, revitalize neighborhoods, and draw attention to underappreciated areas.

From beer gardens to bike shops, pop-up stores typically “pop up” for a limited time, draw in the crowds, and then disappear or morph into something else, creating an atmosphere of freshness, exclusivity, and surprise. Pop-ups can be an appealing option for start-up entrepreneurs wishing to test the waters of a local market without shelling out for high rent. They also serve as local incubators for businesses that may ultimately become permanent, either at the same location or elsewhere.



## Key Steps

### STEP 1 Identify a location.

1 Chances are, there's an empty storefront or other underutilized space in your town that needs a little TLC. The most common locations for pop-ups are vacant buildings, oversized parking lots, and underutilized public spaces, such as parks or squares. Due to the tough economy, many retail spaces in downtown areas remain affordable, making it possible to set up pop-up stores and activities in high-traffic shopping areas. It's best to find a location that can accommodate the number of ventures you'd like to support and that's within walking distance of public transit or a downtown area.

### STEP 2 Engage the community.

2 Build community support for your pop-up proposal from the very beginning. Attend public forums and neighborhood meetings and present your ideas as they develop, engaging with residents to get a sense of what ventures may work best in their area. If you keep residents involved throughout the process, they're more likely to support the pop-up when it goes live, and to tell friends and family.

### STEP 3 Pick a retail focus or event genre.

3 Today's pop-ups run the gamut from *beer gardens* and *food bazaars* to *bicycle shops* and *holiday markets*. For participating vendors, the focus is generally on introducing new product lines—often goods that are locally produced, artisan, or eco-friendly—and creating buzz, rather than maximizing sales. Increasingly, pop-ups are evolving into broader community destinations where people can sample new offerings or learn new skills while having an enjoyable social experience.



Photo: Tashmo Biergarten, Detroit, MI

### STEP 4 Identify potential partners.

4 Anyone can start a pop-up initiative, but the most common backers are local businesses, property owners, artists, community organizations, or government agencies. In Oakland, California, an urban planner and a restaurant owner collaborated with local property owners and the city government to start *popuphood*, an initiative to revitalize a three-block stretch of the downtown through short-term lease pop-up stores. *PopUp! Pittsburgh*, meanwhile, works with diverse regional partners to host one-day, low-cost events to momentarily bring life to high-vacancy districts or neighborhoods.

### STEP 5 Coordinate with the site's owner.

5 If your pop-up location is privately owned, you'll need to coordinate with the property owner to allow for temporary use of the site. Owners of vacant retail space may be eager to fill a storefront for a few weeks or months free of charge or for a reduced rate. If you're using a public space, vendors may need to apply for a permit to temporarily set up shop. One pop-up variation, the solar-powered *KiosKiosk*, is mobile and can be set up and taken down quickly, almost anywhere.

STEP BY STEP

# Supporting Pop-Up Retail

Vacant Spaces + Local Entrepreneurs + Limited Availability = Pop-Up Retail

**STEP 6 Set time parameters.**

Pop-up retail usually aims to create an event-like atmosphere for a limited time, which could range from one day to several months or more. Pick a timeframe that works for you and draw up short-term lease arrangements for businesses and vendors. Consider the option of enabling successful businesses to stay longer or even become permanent occupants, if the opportunity is available.

**STEP 7 Invite retailers to set up shop.**

At a large site, you may be able to accommodate several businesses at the same time; smaller locations may require rotating vendors in and out. When you're ready, put a call out to local entrepreneurs that meet your parameters and invite them to set up shop. Encourage vendors to be creative in their displays and to think outside the (big) box to create greater local appeal.

**STEP 8 Get the word out.**

Use both traditional and new media to raise awareness about your pop-up initiative. Send out a press release describing the project and your motivations behind it, including the many potential benefits to the community and local economy. Use social media to attract supporters and to notify people about participating retailers, upcoming sales, and special events—be sure to underscore the limited-time nature of the initiative. Focus your publicity efforts on the local area—get residents excited!



Girl With Beads KiosKiosk popup store in Nottingham, UK. PHOTO: KIOSKIOSK

**STEP 9 Consider “going permanent.”**

The interest and exposure that pop-ups generate by way of their temporary nature provide a powerful tool for sparking long-term change. In some cases, successful pop-up stores earn the right to stay in the location, creating a win-win-win for the property owner, occupant, and neighborhood. Either way, the benefits of successful pop-ups include safer, more diverse neighborhoods and a more vibrant local economy.



Alfonso Dominguez, owner of Tamarindo and founder of popuphood in Oakland, CA. PHOTO: EVA KOLENKO, POPUPHOOD

**STEP 10 Pioneer the movement!**

Pop-ups are a relatively new thing, so by taking this approach in your own community, you can help grow the larger movement. In addition to pop-up retail, communities have experimented with other kinds of *pop-up placemaking* and *tactical urbanism*, including pop-up *cafés*, *concerts*, *parks*, and even *movies* (check out Pittsburgh's *Spineview* zombie flick), as well as efforts to *build a better block*. The possibilities are endless, so be creative and experiment with what makes sense for your location and your community's needs.

# Buy Local (and Sustainable)

**W**hen asked to name our favorite restaurant, coffee shop, or bookstore, many of us would mention a unique local business that we know and love. Local, independent businesses are owned by our neighbors and fellow community members, and they help define our sense of place.

Yet we often neglect the important role that we, as consumers, play in helping these businesses grow and thrive. And sometimes we find out the hard way, when a favorite local business shuts its doors and we had no idea it was struggling.

Through our everyday choices, we have a large influence in shaping what our economies look like. If we choose to spend our money on cheap, mass-produced goods, it's likely that we'll invite cookie-cutter big-box stores and chain businesses into our communities. But if we choose instead to invest in goods and services that originate locally, are more sustainable, or are sold by local, independent business, we can ensure that more money remains in the local economy, making it into the hands of our neighbors and our communities.

## IDEAS & INSPIRATIONS

Looking for creative ways to support local and green businesses? Here are some ideas to get you started:

**Organize or join a cash mob**, a group of people who agree to all shop at a designated local business on a specific date and time. See [▶ CashMob.com](#), [▶ Cash Mob Marketing](#), [▶ Cash-mobs.com](#), and [▶ these videos](#) of past events. (See also our short video, above, and "Step-by-Step," pages 10–11.)

**Organize or join a carrotmob**, a "reverse boycott" where you encourage a business to become more responsible in return for a pledge of local buying. See [▶ Organizing a Carrot Mob Campaign](#).

**Create a business directory of local, independent businesses** to make it easier for people to identify them. See [▶ Sustainable Connections](#), [▶ Local First Arizona](#), [▶ Local First Milwaukee](#), [▶ Local First West Michigan](#), [▶ Seacoast Local](#), and [▶ Lowcountry Local First](#).

**Start a "Buy Local" campaign** to boost local sales dollars and educate consumers about the benefits of supporting local businesses. See [▶ 10% Shift](#), [▶ Shift Your Shopping](#), Berkeley's [▶ Buy Local](#) campaign, BALLE's [▶ Local First Campaigns how-to manual](#), and the local food site [▶ Farmigo](#).

**Host a "certified local" festival**, featuring local businesses, restaurants, artists, and musicians. See Arizona's [▶ Certified Local Festival](#) and Grand Rapids' [▶ Local First Street Party](#).

**Celebrate an annual "Independents Week" (or day)** to raise awareness of local businesses and encourage people to buy locally. See [▶ AMIBA](#), [▶ Local First Arizona](#), [▶ Love Your Locals](#), and [▶ Austin Unchained](#).

**Facilitate citizen-to-citizen collective purchasing of food and other locally produced items**, such as through community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, community supported fisheries (CSFs), and local buying clubs. See [▶ Local Harvest](#), [▶ Local Catch](#), [▶ Farm to City](#), [▶ K.C. Food Circle](#), and [▶ Start a Buying Club](#).

**Create a local coupon book or loyalty card program** to provide incentives to buy from local businesses. See [▶ Supportland](#), [▶ Sonoma County GoLocal](#), [▶ Local First La Plata](#), and [▶ LiveLocal Alberta](#).

**Air "public service announcements" on the radio, web, or TV about the benefits of buying local over shopping online.** See [▶ sample scripts from AMIBA](#) and [▶ Dane Buy Local](#).

**Encourage local governments, schools, event venues, and others to use local vendors and adopt local purchasing preferences.** See [▶ Farm to School](#) and the efforts of [▶ The Barclays Center](#), [▶ Imperial Valley IBA](#), and [▶ Local First Arizona](#).



## Farmers Markets: Adding Social Value

Farmers markets are booming! In less than a decade, the number of active U.S. farmers markets **has more than quadrupled**, from 1,744 in 2004 to 7,864 in 2012. And the benefits don't just come in the form of fresh local food and increased farm income. In a **study** of 10 California cities, shoppers reported farmers markets as being more friendly, personal, and happier settings than large supermarkets. The study found that on average, 63 percent of shoppers at a farmers market had a conversation with another customer, versus only 9 percent at a large supermarket.

STEP BY STEP

# Organizing a Cash Mob

Local Business + Motivated Shoppers + Social Event = Cash Mob

## What is a cash mob?

A “cash mob” involves organizing a large group of people to show up and support a specified locally owned, independent business at a certain date and time. It’s like a boycott in reverse, where instead of convincing people not to buy from a retailer whose practices may be questionable, you’re getting them to spend money at a place that adds value to the community.

Often, cash mobs target local businesses that actively give back or that demonstrate responsible behavior, such as using sustainable practices or selling locally made, fair trade, or eco-friendly products. Rather than simply being a one-day economic stimulus, cash mobs typically result in new customers and new relationships within the community. All in all, cash mobs are a fun and easy way to get people to vote with their dollars and to raise awareness about the importance of buying local.

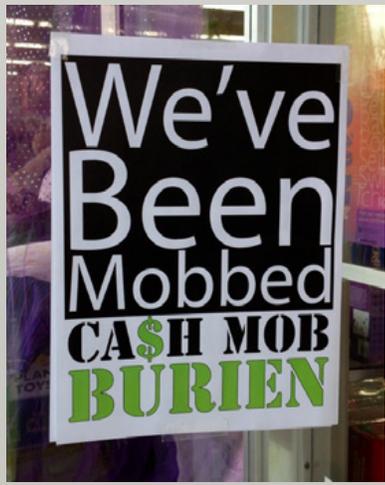


Photo: BurienDaily.com

## Key Steps

### STEP 1 Establish a core team and consider the “who” and “why.”

Assemble a small team of people who are interested in organizing a cash mob and establish some common goals. Do you want to support a particular type of business (such as family-owned or eco-friendly), or a particular type of product? Is the goal just to generate financial support, or will there be broader engagement? One variation, a *carrot mob*, encourages businesses to take specific actions in exchange for being selected for a mob—such as switching out incandescent light bulbs to boost energy efficiency.



Photo: Flickr/tupalo.com

### STEP 2 Establish a rough event schedule.

Cash mobs can be easy to organize, but it’s helpful to have a basic template for logistics so you don’t have to start from scratch every time. Determine how often you’ll hold the mobs—maybe monthly or bi-monthly—and try to establish a regular schedule. Most mobs last around 4–5 hours and happen on weekday evenings—say, the first Thursday of the month—so participants can come straight from work. Designate at least one person to be the point person or coordinator for each mob.

### STEP 3 Create a platform for spreading the word.

Set up a web page or blog as a centralized place where people can learn more about the goals of your mob and find out about upcoming events. A *Facebook page* and *Twitter* account (include the name of your city and “cash mob” in the name) can help you establish your presence and get the word out quickly. To gain a strong following, start by “liking” and “following” local businesses and members of the community, and encourage people to share your events.

### STEP 4 Select businesses and products to target.

Develop a tentative list of businesses or products to support, based on the goals you’ve established for your mob. Is there a new farmers market in town? A new local producer of natural soaps? Is a particular business struggling financially or just poorly publicized? Ideally, pick mob locations that are walkable or near public transit. On your social media sites, ask potential mobbers to recommend their favorite local businesses as a way to tap into the pulse of the community and encourage greater buy-in.

STEP BY STEP

# Organizing a Cash Mob

Local Business + Motivated Shoppers + Social Event = Cash Mob

**STEP 5** Reach out to your chosen business.

Supporting a local business financially is only part of the point of a cash mob. Equally important is letting the business know why you're supporting them, and to encourage them to do even more. Reach out to the business owner and explain the goals and vision of your mob. Make sure they're aware of the selected date and time so they can bring on extra inventory or staff if needed. Encourage them to make a fun event out of the mob, inviting their own friends and customers and offering special discounts or refreshments.



Cash mob at Appalachian Press, Roanoke, VA. PHOTO: THE ROANOKE STAR

**STEP 6** Lay out basic parameters for mobbers.

Despite its name, a cash mob shouldn't be a disorderly mass of people descending on a store. Remind potential mobbers (on your website and, if necessary, in person) that the goal is to create a positive impact in the community, and that people need to be respectful of both the business and other shoppers. Some organizers ask mobbers to spend a minimum of \$10–20, offer prizes for big spenders, or encourage participants to meet at least three new people at the event.

**STEP 7** Get publicity.

Announce the mob date and location at least a week in advance (or, keep it a secret and announce the location only a few hours before, inviting people to assemble nearby and enter en masse!). Contact your local papers and community groups to get them to write stories and publicize your schedule. List the event on Facebook or a national site like [CashMob.com](http://CashMob.com) to explain *why the location deserves a mob*, send out texts or emails advertising the event, and post flyers in coffee shops and other public spaces to *encourage people to get involved*.

**STEP 8** On mob day, be social and have fun!

Have at least one organizer on hand to facilitate the event. Chat and mingle with participants so they feel like they're not just coming to shop, but also to meet friends, build relationships, and contribute to a larger goal. Collect names to add to your email list, and take photos or video that you can post online later. Consider making a brief presentation about the goals of the mob and to thank people for coming out and shopping locally. Cash mobs should be as much community-building events as income-generating opportunities!

**STEP 9** Celebrate and evaluate

Invite mob participants to an "aftermob" Immediately following the event to celebrate at a nearby locally owned restaurant or pub. There, you can enjoy drinks and good company, discuss any potential changes to your approach, and plan the next day of mobbing.

**STEP 10** Expand your goals.

Eventually, your group may wish to take on a more active role, influencing businesses to engage in certain desired practices or to carry certain products in exchange for being "mobbed." As businesses realize the power that cash mobs can have within a community, they can become more hands-on partners in building a strong local economy and a more sustainable future.

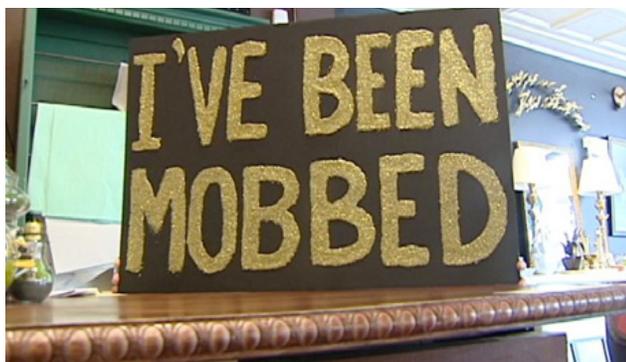


Photo: Craig Marimpicetri

# Invest Locally

Sometimes, it seems like the only options we have for investing our money are large mutual funds or other impersonal investment vehicles that dominate Wall Street. But there are alternatives! By participating in the growing local investment movement, we can support our neighbors, keep money circulating in the local economy, and help generate the financing that's needed to build and maintain strong local businesses and communities.

Whether it's moving our money to a local credit union, hosting a "pitchfest" to fund local entrepreneurs, or getting a bunch of people together to form a local investment club, there are lots of ways that we can help our money work actively for our neighbors on Main Street.

## IDEAS & INSPIRATIONS

### Encourage people to pay by cash or check instead of using a credit card.

This can save you money, lower the [▶ transaction costs](#) for local vendors, and minimize leakage of money out of the community from interest payments and other card-related fees. See [▶ Cash vs. Credit for Saving Money](#) and [▶ The Leaky Bucket](#) report (p. 9).

**Encourage people and institutions to move their money (and mortgages) to a small local bank, credit union, community development finance institution (CDFI), or "triple-bottom-line bank."** See [▶ Top 5 Reasons to Choose a Community Bank or Credit Union](#), [▶ Tools for Starting a Local Move Your Money Campaign](#), [▶ Tell Your School: Move Our Money](#), the [▶ 10% Shift](#), the [▶ Credit Union Locator](#), [▶ Montana CDC](#), [▶ Opportunity Finance Network](#), the [▶ CDFI Coalition](#), and [▶ One PacificCoast Bank](#).

**Hold a pitchfest, entrepreneur showcase, or "soup" micro-granting event** to encourage local investors to fund local social enterprises and other businesses. See [▶ Seacoast Local Entrepreneur Showcase](#), [▶ Slow Money Northern California Pitchfests](#), [▶ BALLE Entrepreneur Showcases webinar](#), and [▶ The Soup Network](#). (See also our short video, above, and "Step-by-Step," pages 13–14.)

**Participate in online crowdfunding** to support innovative local artisans, projects, and businesses. See [▶ CircleUp](#), [▶ Clearbon](#), [▶ IndieGoGo](#), [▶ ioby](#), [▶ Kickstarter](#), [▶ Pozible](#), [▶ Smallknot](#), [▶ SoMoLend](#), [▶ StartSomeGood](#), and [▶ How to Run a Successful Crowdfunding Campaign](#).

**Support a local direct public offering (DPO)**, through which a business offers stock directly to the public. See [▶ What is a DPO](#) and examples like [▶ People's Community Market](#), [▶ Farm Fresh to You](#), and [▶ Quimper Mercantile](#).

**Start a Lending Circle** to get people together to form a group loan outside of a traditional financial institution. See [▶ Mission Asset Fund](#) and [▶ eMoneyPool](#).



2013 Spring Video Pitchfest, hosted by Slow Money Austin. PHOTO: JARRED MAXWELL



**Start or join a local investment club.** See [▶ Slow Money, Local Investment Opportunity Network \(LION\)](#), and [▶ No Small Potatoes](#).

**Encourage local banks to finance or lend locally.** See [▶ Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative](#), [▶ One PacificCoast Bank](#), [▶ New Resource Bank](#), and [▶ Ithaca's Community Partnership Lending program](#).

**For more innovative models and best practices** to try out in your community, see BALLE's ongoing [▶ Community Capital webinar series](#) and [▶ recordings of past webinars](#).

## Community Banks and Credit Unions: Adding Local Value

As people *seek out new places* to keep their money, many are embracing alternatives to large commercial banks—such as credit unions or small community banks. Because credit unions are less concerned about maximizing profits at all costs, they are less exposed to the many risky loans that can hurt other banks so badly. U.S. credit unions had their *best year ever* in 2012, adding more than 2 million members and bringing total membership to 93.8 million.

Part of the appeal is the lower fees: 72% of the country's 50 largest credit unions offer *free checking accounts* with no strings attached. But local businesses also benefit. Small and mid-sized community banks hold just under a quarter of total bank assets, yet they are responsible for making *over half* of all small business loans. Deposits at small banks and credit unions have grown by more than \$77 billion since 2008.

STEP BY STEP

# Holding a Pitchfest

Local Entrepreneurs + Business Pitches + Everyday Investors = Pitchfest

## What is a pitchfest?

Pitchfests (also called entrepreneur showcases) are fun, informative events where local entrepreneurs who are looking to raise capital can connect with everyday investors and community members. During the event, the entrepreneurs give lightning, 3–5 minute presentations to “pitch” their business ideas to the audience in an informal setting that typically includes food, drink, and plenty of mingling.

The purpose of a pitchfest, from an entrepreneur’s perspective, is to get the audience excited about your business and to identify interested community members with whom to start building relationships. From an investor’s standpoint, pitchfests are an opportunity to learn about various local businesses and to determine which ones to support in a bigger way. A pitchfest is a matchmaking event of sorts, serving as the first step toward connecting local entrepreneurs and investors in meaningful ways.



Photo: Greater Boston Slow Money Pitchfest

## Key Steps

### STEP 1 Create committees.

It really does take a village! Find interested people to help staff the committees you’ll need to help execute a successful pitchfest in your community. Key committees include: **planning** (to handle event logistics, volunteers, and online components); **marketing and outreach** (to spread the word, create flyers, and promote the event); **entrepreneur support** (to select the presenters, help them prepare for the event, and offer guidance); and **investor and champion follow-up** (to serve as a liaison between investors and the pitching businesses, and to facilitate the conversations post-pitchfest).

### STEP 2 Select a location.

Choose a location that fits your community and goals for the event. New Hampshire’s *Seacoast Local* held its first entrepreneur showcase at a local bar. *Slow Money Northern California* held its first pitchfest in a large conference center but quickly evolved to hosting the events, potluck-style, on family farms. Be creative in shaping a relevant experience at a location that’s right for you.

### STEP 3 Establish goals for the event.

Be very clear about what you hope to get out of the event. Having fun should be a top goal, but close behind that is connecting folks with each other and with featured entrepreneurs. *Slow Money Northern California* rounds out its pitchfests with farm tours, ample space and time for interacting, and music and dancing to create a fun, lively environment.

### STEP 4 Develop clear criteria for entrepreneurs.

A pitchfest could focus on any mix of businesses, but they typically help foster local or environmentally sustainable businesses. When you issue your call for participants, be clear about your criteria so you receive “qualified” entrepreneurs. You might ask that a business be located within 150 miles of the designated region, demonstrate sustainable practices (such as energy efficiency or waste reduction), or fill a specific social justice or community need (such as *sustainable food and farming*, the focus of the group *Slow Money*).

### STEP 5 Select pitchfest presenters.

Create a vetting committee to review and select the right mix of entrepreneurs. Depending on the event’s duration, consider lining up 8–12 presenters who will each give a five-minute pitch, so the audience doesn’t sit through more than an hour of presentations. You may also wish to line up someone to make opening remarks and moderate the event.

### STEP 6 Identify a “champion” for each presenter.

Critical! Your organizing group will need to designate a liaison (or “champion”) for each entrepreneur to help facilitate the follow-up conversations. Their primary role is to organize the people interested in a specific presenter and to help move the conversation forward after the event.

STEP BY STEP

# Holding a Pitchfest

Local Entrepreneurs + Business Pitches + Everyday Investors = Pitchfest

**STEP 7** Prep presenters for the event.

Set clear expectations for your “pitchers.” Emphasize that the goal is to get people excited about their business idea, and not to expect immediate funding at the end of the night. Create a “Presenters Packet” that includes logistics, goals for the event, and tips for presenting (including what they should and shouldn’t say). Include links and information about *federal* and *state* securities laws and recommend that they seek legal advice before fundraising, since some laws *prohibit the “general solicitation” of a security.*

**STEP 8** Set up a system for collecting feedback.

Another critical step! Set up a system to collect interest in a presenter before, during, and after the event. This could be a postcard with checkboxes that is turned in during the event, an online survey a few days later, or any other method that helps people say, “I’d like to learn more about XYZ business.” Champions will use this list to begin follow-up conversations.

**STEP 9** Hold a fun, interactive event!

Since relationships are the goal, create an environment on event day that encourages conversation. Have table space available for each presenter (samples, flyers, collateral, sign-up sheets, etc.) and make sure there’s plenty of room for conversations and interaction. Distribute a program or flyer that includes the list of entrepreneurs and their contact information for attendees to take home.

**STEP 10** Form interest groups, build relationships, and follow up.



Pitchfest at SXSW Interactive Festival in Austin, Texas. PHOTO: INDIEGOGO



Sunday Soup at InCUBATE in Chicago, Illinois. PHOTO: BRYCE DWYER

It may take anywhere from a week to a year for an investor to decide to fund a specific business, so don’t expect everyone to write checks that day. Post-event, have the “champion” for each business gather interested people and coordinate follow-up events to help foster relationships between the entrepreneur and potential investors. These could be field trips, experiences, dinner parties, conference calls, informal meetups, etc. Designate someone to communicate with the champions on a monthly basis to keep the momentum going, and to report back any progress or challenges. If there isn’t a champion and a follow-up system, the deals won’t happen as easily.

**BONUS STEP!** Deals happen!

**11** Community investing takes many shapes. Some local investments are debt arrangements, some are equity. Some include a *royalty structure* where investors get a share of revenues, and some even include getting “interest” paid back in chickens! Whatever the *end structure*, all deals are hugely relationship-driven, catering to the mutual needs of the parties involved and ultimately helping to foster a strong local economy.

—Jill Epner, BALLE

Photo: Greater Boston Slow Money Pitchfest



## Want to Learn More?

### Recommended Reading

*Agenda for a New Economy: From Phantom Wealth to Real Wealth*, by David Korten

*America the Possible: Manifesto for a New Economy*, by Gus Speth

*Big Box Swindle*, by Stacy Mitchell

*Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, by Robert Putnam

*Good Morning, Beautiful Business!*, by Judy Wicks

*Guide to Community Financial Capital*, by BALLE (forthcoming 2013)

*Local Dollars, Local Sense*, by Michael H. Shuman

*Locavesting: The Revolution in Local Investing and How to Profit From It*, by Amy Cortese

*Owning Our Future: The Emerging Ownership Revolution*, by Marjorie Kelley

*Storyteller Uprising*, by Hanson Hosein

*Tactical Urbanism 2*, by The Street Plans Collaborative

*The End of Money and the Future of Civilization*, by Thomas Greco, Jr.

*The Small-Mart Revolution*, by Michael H. Shuman

*Walk Out, Walk On: A Learning Journey Into Communities Daring to Live the Future Now*, by Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze

*What's the Economy For, Anyway*, by John deGraaf

### Organizations/Websites

#### **American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA).**

A non-profit organization helping communities launch and successfully operate an independent business alliance, create “buy independent, buy local” campaigns, forward pro-local policies, and take other initiatives to support local entrepreneurs and vibrant local economies.

**Association for Enterprise Opportunity.** A national association of community-based organizations that provides entrepreneurial education, access to capital, and support to low-income entrepreneurs.

#### **Business Alliance for Local Living Economies**

(BALLE). A nationwide organization that equips entrepreneurs with tools and strategies for local success, and provides the national forum for the most visionary local economy leaders and funders to connect, build their capacity, and innovate.

**Democracy Collaborative.** Provides a huge online resource library for building community wealth. We suggest starting [here](#).

**Institute for Local Self Reliance (ILSR).** Does outstanding research and advocacy work to promote local ownership and community empowerment. Their site lists dozens of examples of local and state policies.

**National Main Street Center.** The nation’s clearinghouse for information, technical assistance, research and advocacy on preservation-based commercial district revitalization.

**New England Local Business Forum.** An informal network of Independent Business Alliances and similarly-modeled groups in New England. A wonderful regional collaboration of place-based business networks of the sort BALLE and AMIBA support.

**Post Carbon Institute.** Assists societies in their efforts to relocalize communities and adapt to an energy-constrained world.



The following groups mentioned

in this guide are members of the BALLE Network:

*Buffalo First!*, *Colorado Local First*, *Dane Buy Local*, *East Bay Sustainable Business Alliance*, *Live Local Alberta*, *Local First Arizona*, *Local First La Plata*, *Local First Milwaukee*, *Local First West Michigan*, *Lowcountry Local First*, *Mile High Business Alliance*, *People’s Grocery*, *Seacoast Local*, *Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia*, and *Sustainable Connections*.

## About This Guide

**T**his [Guide to Going Local](http://guidetogoinglocal.org) ([guidetogoinglocal.org](http://guidetogoinglocal.org)) is part of New Dream's larger *New Dream Community Action Kit*, a creative, fun, and easy-to-use online kit that promotes collective action and civic engagement to build healthier, happier, and more sustainable communities. The Action Kit consists of a series of guides on specific topics to help people around the country organize and implement projects in their own neighborhoods. To access the full Action Kit and additional guides, please visit [www.newdream.org/communityactionkit](http://www.newdream.org/communityactionkit).

Tell us your stories! Did you find this guide useful? Did you try any of our project ideas in your community? Share your feedback on our website at [www.newdream.org/communityactionkit](http://www.newdream.org/communityactionkit) or by emailing us at [newdream@newdream.org](mailto:newdream@newdream.org).

### Acknowledgments

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## Get2gether

Meet up. Get Active. Build Community.

► [www.newdream.org/get2gether](http://www.newdream.org/get2gether)

*Wish you could meet other like-minded people in your area?*

*Want to get active and promote a New American Dream in your own community?*

**It's time to Get2gether.**

Through our **Get2gether** platform, you'll have the chance to meet fellow New Dreamers who live near you, to join local New Dream Teams, and to work together to organize real projects for your community.

### About the Center for a New American Dream

New Dream helps Americans reduce and shift their consumption to improve quality of life, protect the environment, and promote social justice. We seek to cultivate a new American dream—one that emphasizes community, ecological sustainability, and a celebration of non-material values. We envision a society that pursues not just "more," but more of what matters—and less of what doesn't. Learn more at [www.newdream.org](http://www.newdream.org).

### About BALLE (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies)

BALLE's mission is to catalyze, strengthen, and connect networks of locally owned independent businesses dedicated to building strong Local Living Economies. Join the fast-growing community of more than 30,000 Localists: entrepreneurs who are rethinking their industries, funders who are investing in the local economy movement, and network organizers who are mobilizing on a broad scale. Become a *BALLE member* at [www.bealocalist.org](http://www.bealocalist.org).