

For Immediate Release

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San Joaquin County Launches Shop San Joaquin

\$1 million investment in shop local initiative to benefit local small business

Stockton, CA - San Joaquin County's Employment and Economic Development Department (EEDD) is pleased to announce the launch of *Shop San Joaquin*, an economic development program intended to support the economic recovery of the retail and hospitality industries from impacts caused by the pandemic.

"The increased cost of goods and services has impacted us all and Shop San Joaquin will benefit small businesses and consumers alike through a cash back rewards program," said Patricia Virgen, Director of EEDD. "Our goal is to support small businesses by incentivizing shoppers with a new way to shop local."

To incentivize residents to shop locally, the program allows consumers to earn rewards when shopping at local small businesses which must be independently owned with fewer than 500 employees, located in San Joaquin County, and operating in the food-and-beverage, hospitality, or retail industries. Businesses cannot be part of a corporate chain and must have been established as of January 1, 2020. There are no requirements for local businesses to be in the program.

To participate,

- Download the free *Open Rewards: Shop Local app* on Google Play or the App Store
- Sign up
- Go to a local restaurant or retailer listed within the app and spend \$50
- Pay for the purchase as usual
- Upload the receipt to Shop San Joaquin - Open Rewards app (or link a credit card to automate this step)
- Receive 100% cash back rewards in the account once the receipt is approved
- Redeem the rewards on future purchases at eligible businesses or continue to save up the rewards.

Each transaction will receive a 100% reward rate with a maximum reward cap of \$50 per transaction and consumers can earn rewards up to \$200 per calendar year. There are currently 1,625 eligible small businesses in the Shop San Joaquin app, which can be found within the app.

"The Board of Supervisors is proud to support EEDD's creative initiatives that strengthen small businesses in our community," said Miguel Villapudua, Chair of the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors. "Small businesses are the backbone of our community and represent the entrepreneurial spirit of the Valley. Economic development is one of the Board's strategic priorities and we look forward to the positive impact Shop San Joaquin will have on small businesses and residents alike."

On May 21, 2024, the Board of Supervisors invested \$1 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to seed the program. Shop San Joaquin will run through December 31, 2026, or until funds expire.

Participating San Joaquin County businesses may receive free promotional materials, including flyers, tent cards, social media images and other materials by emailing EDA@sjcworknet.org.

For more information on Shop San Joaquin or to sign up, visit: <https://45522635.hs-sites.com/shop-san-joaquin-bludot-2024>

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