



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Choose Local San Mateo County App Launched Across San Mateo County **Points-based program rewards shoppers for supporting local small businesses**

Redwood City— In advance of the holiday season, the County of San Mateo and seven cities are asking shoppers to support local small business and rewarding those that do through a new points-based mobile app that lets them earn cash discounts at participating locations.

The Choose Local San Mateo County program is a way for both shoppers and businesses to benefit while helping the post-pandemic recovery.

“COVID-19 has decimated too many small businesses across San Mateo County,” said Board President David J. Canepa. “Supporting small businesses is supporting our economic recovery. As residents plan for their holiday shopping, or return to activities, we invite them to visit local businesses — many of which are minority- and women-owned — and participate in our collective economic recovery ahead.”

The easy-to-use Choose Local San Mateo County mobile app enables shoppers to earn rewards automatically at hundreds of participating local businesses, which include restaurants, cafes, spas, boutiques, yoga studios, and more. This initial launch includes participating businesses from seven pilot areas: Daly City, Half Moon Bay/Coastside, Millbrae, Redwood City and North Fair Oaks, San Carlos, San Mateo, and South San Francisco, with plans to expand to additional cities soon. To date, over 334 businesses are participating in the Choose Local San Mateo County program, with new businesses joining daily.

One point equates to one dollar, which can then be redeemed as cash discounts at select businesses. All rewards are reimbursed by the County of San Mateo through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding at no cost to the small businesses or consumers.

“Local businesses are the foundation of a thriving community,” said County Manager Mike Callagy. “As the epicenter of innovation, the County of San Mateo and our city partners are bringing the latest technologies to the hardest-hit sector of our economy: small businesses. Simply put, we will not have an equitable recovery without an emphasis on small business recovery.”

In ongoing efforts to support local businesses, the County of San Mateo partnered with [Colu Technologies](#) to develop the Choose Local San Mateo County app. The County joins a growing list of local municipalities to launch similar initiatives that provide critical boosts for business districts and celebrates the diversity of small business owners and operators. While many cities have launched similar initiatives, the County of San Mateo is the first jurisdiction to take a countywide, regional approach to economic recovery and leverage mobile app technology.

“Money that is spent locally will stay local and support a business that has survived the pandemic,” said Rosanne Foust, president & CEO of the San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA). “When consumers opt for local retailers, studios or restaurants, they are also supporting the employees, the suppliers, the landlords, delivery drivers, and many others that rely on that business to succeed in San Mateo County. Choosing local businesses is choosing to participate in our county’s economic recovery.”

Choose Local San Mateo County is the latest initiative spearheaded by the County of San Mateo to boost economic recovery in response to COVID-19. This work builds upon previous initiatives to distribute over \$217,700,000 in COVID-19 relief funds to provide emergency support for small businesses, rental assistance, food support, childcare and nonprofits, access to technology, and immigrant assistance; along with ongoing workforce development efforts to train and place workers in available jobs.

How Choose Local San Mateo County Works:

1. **Download the free Choose Local San Mateo County app** from [Google Play](#) or the [Apple Store](#) and securely link your credit cards, debit cards, or prepaid debit cards to your account. The first 700 users to download and link a card will receive 10 SMC Points!
2. **Join reward offers and start shopping and dining locally**, earning SMC Points automatically through qualifying purchases made with your linked cards at local businesses.
3. **Redeem SMC Points for cash discounts** at redeeming local businesses. Each SMC Point is worth one dollar.
4. **Encourage your favorite businesses to join Choose Local San Mateo County** [signing up here](#).

How Local Businesses Benefit and Can Participate:

- Choose Local is designed to empower community members to shop local and support hard-working small business owners and employees in their neighborhood and surrounding communities.
- Through profiles and stories within the app, Choose Local San Mateo County shines a spotlight on local businesses and gives you a way to attract more customers.
- App users can discover the diversity of local businesses, get to know the stories about owners, employees and services, and earn SMC Points, which can be redeemed later at select businesses around town.
- As a business owner, you can choose to accept SMC Points as payment at no cost to you. These “redeeming businesses” will be featured in the app and enjoy greater interest and foot traffic as a destination where locals can redeem their SMC Points.
- After app users redeem Points at your business, the County transfers payment to you for their monetary value. One SMC Point equals \$1.
- Participation will cost your business ZERO dollars -the County funds the Points program.
- Apply to join the program by filling out [this application](#).

Overview of Choose Local San Mateo County at Launch:

- 7 participating cities, including the county unincorporated area of North Fair Oaks
- 334 local businesses participating
- 381 user downloads

To learn more about Choose Local San Mateo County, visit: www.chooselocalsmc.com.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE CHOOSE LOCAL SAN MATEO COUNTY APP

"Daly City's small businesses and the small business owners and their employees in San Mateo County are as diverse as the people who live here, and it feels great to know our choices today to shop locally can support them so they remain here long into the future. Let's eat and shop local!"

- Daly City Mayor Juslyn Manalo

"We all have a role to play in our collective economic recovery, and residents can immediately help neighborhood businesses by eating, shopping, and spending locally while earning Choose Local San Mateo County Points."

- South San Francisco Mayor Mark Addiego

"All of the national retailers and online megastores have Apps. Choose Local San Mateo County is trying to level the playing field for small businesses in our downtowns and business districts. People only need to shift a portion of their spending away from chains and to local businesses to make an enormous economic difference!"

- San Mateo Mayor Eric Rodriguez

"The small business owner around the corner or across town from all of us has endured unimaginable financial impacts from pandemic shutdowns and expenses. Many did not make it. We must support them with every dollar we can spend locally and this app makes it so easy!"

- Millbrae Mayor Ann Schneider

"The next time you reach for your phone to shop, please download the Choose Local San Mateo County app and support your neighborhood businesses, collect points, and get rewarded with points to spend like cash at the places you already eat and shop."

- Half Moon Bay Mayor Robert Brownstone

"As employees return to offices in our cities and downtowns, they can earn points at the restaurants and retailers they already frequent - there is no downside to downloading this app and being rewarded for supporting local businesses."

- San Carlos Mayor Laura Parmer-Lohan

"The pandemic forced many of us to learn how to use our smartphones to shop, eat, and stay connected during the worst months of COVID-19. It's easy to shop at chain stores online and that's ok sometimes - but the locally owned business down the street needs you to shop local whenever possible. It is the only way they will survive. Please download this app and be a good neighbor."

- Redwood City Mayor Diane Howard