



City of Arts & Innovation

# News Release

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**Contact:**

Phil Pitchford

Public Information Officer

951-826-5975

[ppitchford@riversideca.gov](mailto:ppitchford@riversideca.gov)

## **City of Riverside Expands Program to Help Businesses Operate During Pandemic**

*Retail and service businesses can open outdoors as part of program first set up for restaurants*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – A program designed to help restaurants in Riverside stay open outdoors in accordance with state requirements has been expanded to assist retail and service businesses.

The Temporary Outdoor Flex Space Program allows for business operations on both private land and in the public rights-of-way while adhering to public safety and physical distancing requirements.

There is no initial cost for the initial Temporary Outdoor Flex-Space Permit. Most businesses can begin outdoor operations immediately after turning in their application by self-certifying that all conditions have been met. The only businesses that would require an inspection before beginning outdoor operations are those operating in a street, alley or other public right-of-way.

“This innovative approach will help our local businesses stay open with a minimum amount of red tape,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “Our restaurants have embraced this approach, which holds great promise for retail and service businesses as well.”

The City of Riverside initially created the program to assist restaurants that otherwise could have to close as a result of state mandates. The program was expanded to include retail and service businesses following the issuance of additional state mandates on Monday.

Those additional state mandates ordered the closure of indoor operations at gyms and fitness centers, places of worship, indoor protests, offices for noncritical infrastructure sectors, personal care services (including nail salons, massage parlors, and tattoo parlors), hair salons and barbershops, and malls.

The City of Riverside’s expanded program for outside operations took effect the next day.

“The effort to quickly repurpose a program that initially was aimed only at restaurants to include additional businesses was very encouraging,” Mayor Pro Tem Steve Hemenway said. “I look forward to additional ways in which our City can help our local business community remain strong.”

This program only applies to businesses identified by the State of California as “lower risk workplaces” as identified on the State’s Resilience Roadmap. Guidelines and additional information can be found at: <https://www.riversideca.gov/press/covid-19-business-resources>

For the latest information and resources regarding COVID-19 -- [www.RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19](http://www.RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19)