



2025

RETAILER EDUCATION MATERIAL

TO OUR VALUED LOCAL TOBACCO RETAIL BUSINESSES:

The County of San Diego Tobacco Control Resource Program (TCRP) is providing this packet of resources to help local tobacco retailers comply with California tobacco sales laws.

The trend of declining tobacco sales has many tobacco retail stores transitioning away from sales of these products. This packet provides resources to help retailers make the transition, including providing suggestions of higher margin products.

For more information, email tobacco@sdcounty.ca.gov or visit tinyurl.com/TCRPInfo.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to thank the following organizations for their help and support developing the Retailer Education Materials:

- Community, Action, Service, & Advocacy/CASA
- County of San Diego Economic Development Workgroup
- East County Economic Development Council
- Envision Broadway
- MainStreet Oceanside
- San Diego Regional East County Chamber of Commerce
- Service Corps of Retired Executives
- Social Advocates for Youth San Diego
- Tobacco-Free Coalition of Trinity County
- Vista Community Clinic

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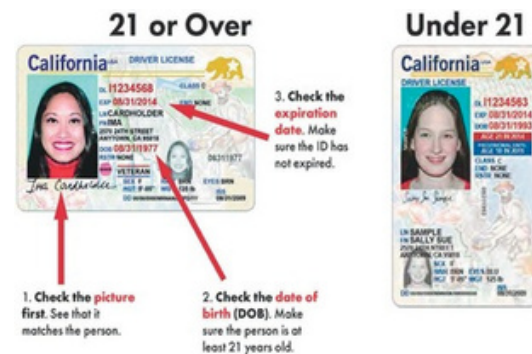
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TIPS TO COMPLY WITH TOBACCO LAWS

CALIFORNIA LAW PROHIBITS TOBACCO SALES TO PEOPLE UNDER AGE 21

The Stop Tobacco Access to Kids Enforcement (STAKE) Act prohibits the sale and furnishing of tobacco products to persons under the age of 21. Learn more here: tinyurl.com/STAKEAct.

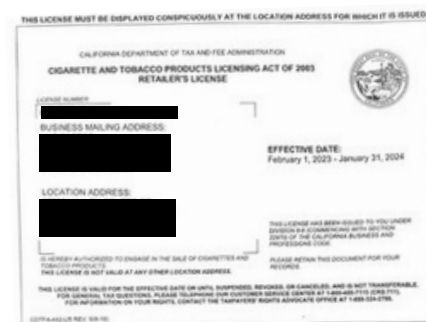
Retailers must check the ID of anyone who looks younger than 30 years of age. [21 CFR 1140.14(a)(2)].



Source: CDPH

TOBACCO RETAILERS MUST BE LICENSED IN CALIFORNIA

To sell tobacco products in California, a retailer must obtain a California Cigarette and Tobacco Products Retailer License administered by the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration and pay an annual fee (currently \$265). Learn more here: cdtfa.ca.gov. Local licenses may also be required. Check with your city before selling tobacco products.



DISPLAY STOP TOBACCO ACCESS TO KIDS ENFORCEMENT (STAKE) ACT AGE-OF-SALE WARNING SIGNS AT EACH REGISTER

Tobacco retailers are required to post age-of-sale warning signs at each point of sale, which state that selling tobacco products to anyone under 21 years of age is illegal and subject to penalties at each point of sale.

Signs available free of cost here: tinyurl.com/Tobacco21Law
Training videos available here: tinyurl.com/stakeTutorials



Source: CDPH

SELF-SERVICE TOBACCO DISPLAYS ARE NOT PERMITTED

A self-service display is any display that allows customers to access items without help from the retailer. Remove any self-service displays for tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices, liquids for use inside electronic cigarettes (e-liquids), components, parts, or accessories. Specific exceptions are made for tobacco only stores for limited products.

The 2025 *Tobacco Control Laws that Affect California Retail Businesses* helps retailers comply with California tobacco laws, offering guidance on regulations, enforcement, and education. Found here: tinyurl.com/2025TobaccoRetailerLaws

To Report an Unlawful Tobacco Sale, Call 1-800-5 ASK-4-ID



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

STUDY SHOWS TOBACCO FLAVOR BANS DID NOT IMPACT PROFITS

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 2023 REPORT “THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF CIGARETTE SALES AND FLAVOR BANS ON TOBACCO RETAIL BUSINESSES”:

- Declines in cigarette sales did not adversely impact retailers.
- Bans on the sale of flavored tobacco products did not adversely impact retailers.

Learn more about the [Economic Effects Report](https://tinyurl.com/EconomicEffectsReport) | tinyurl.com/EconomicEffectsReport.

PROFIT MARGINS FOR VARIOUS CONVENIENCE STORE PRODUCTS:

Among the compared products:

- Food services have the largest profit margin.
- Cigarettes have the lowest profit margin.

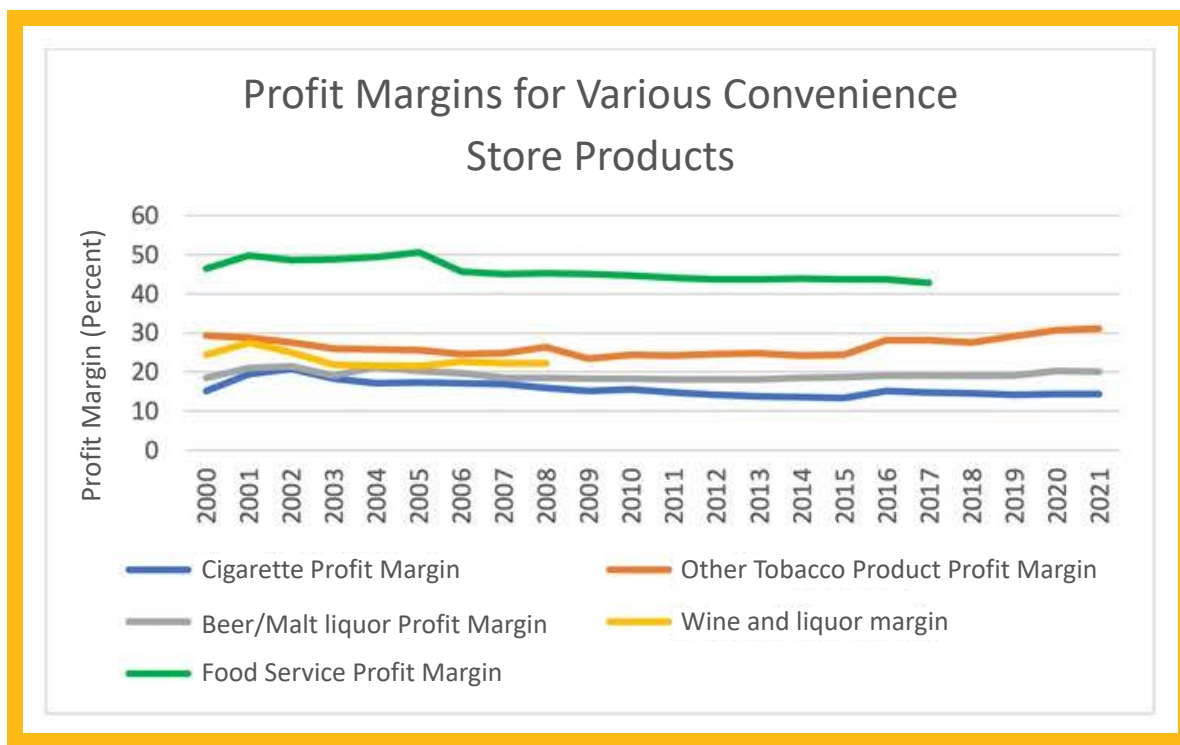


Figure 1: Profit Margins for Various Convenience Store Products

Source: Tauras, J.A. & Chaloupka, F.J. (2023). *The Economic Effects of Cigarette Sales and Flavor Bans on Tobacco Retail Businesses*. *Tobacconomics*.

- ➔ Trend data suggest that convenience stores successfully adapt to changes in market conditions.
- ➔ Tobacco sales consistently generate the smallest fraction of revenue.

Industry myth: “Flavor bans are bad for business.” This is a commonly used talking point of the tobacco industry.

FACT: Convenience stores are thriving despite declining cigarette sales:

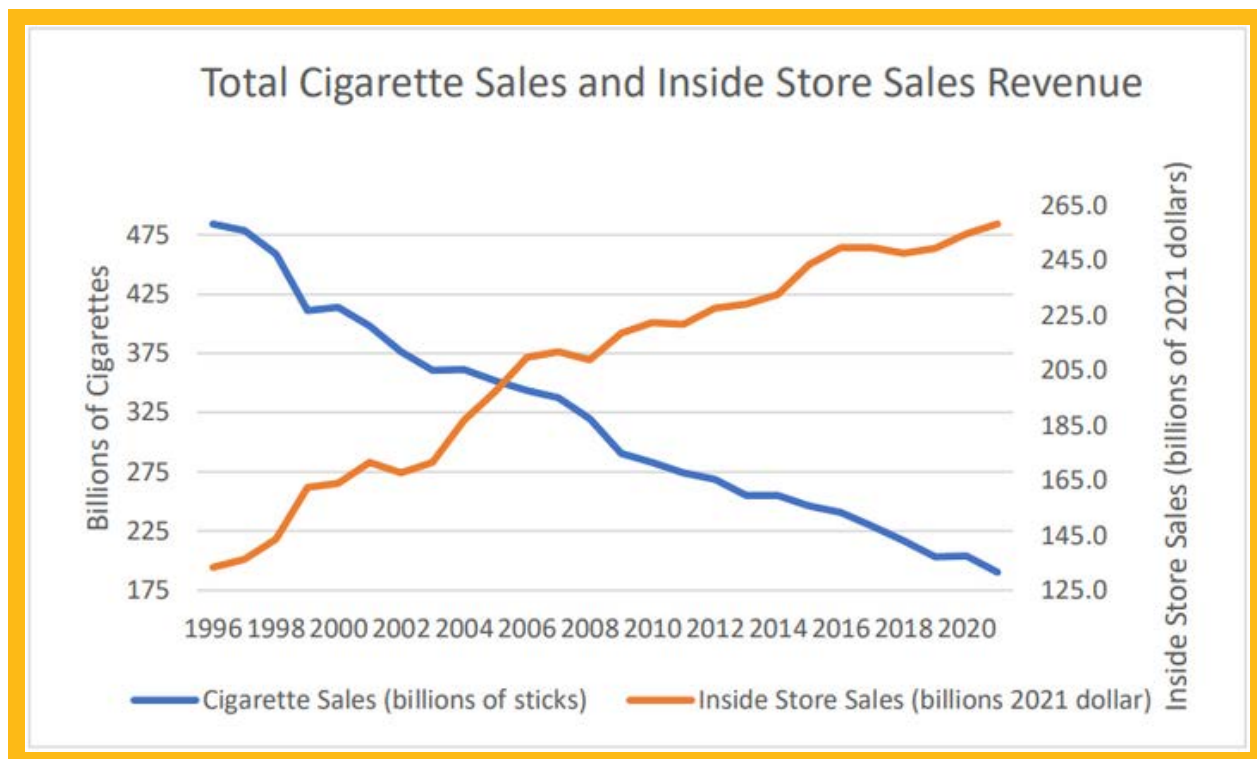


Figure 2: Total Cigarette Sales and Inside Store Sales Revenue

Source: Tauras, J.A. & Chaloupka, F.J. (2023). *The Economic Effects of Cigarette Sales and Flavor Bans on Tobacco Retail Businesses*. *Tobacconomics*.

- ➔ The number of convenience stores, in-store sales revenues, cigarette sales revenues and profits have all generally increased while cigarette sales have declined.

California state law prohibits the sale of most flavored tobacco products, including flavored electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and menthol cigarettes, as well as tobacco product flavor enhancers in retail locations, including stores and vending machines. Learn more about the **CA Flavor Ban** | tinyurl.com/CAFlavorBan.

The penalties apply to retailers, their agents, or their employees who sell, offer for sale, or possess with intent to sell most flavored tobacco products. This includes e-cigarettes that deliver nicotine or other vaporized liquids, menthol cigarettes, and tobacco product flavor enhancers.

- Flavored e-cigarettes or vapes that deliver a flavored e-liquid
- Flavored e-liquids, even if they contain tobacco-free nicotine or do not contain any nicotine
- Vape pens with flavored cannabidiol (CBD), aromatherapy, or essential oils
- Menthol cigarettes
- Flavored non-premium cigars, little cigars, and cigarillos
- Flavored smokeless tobacco
- Flavored blunt wraps and flavored hemp wraps
- Flavored loose-leaf, roll-your-own tobacco
- Flavor enhancers, such as e-liquid flavor enhancers or flavored cigarette papers



Learn more about the:

- **CDPH - FAQs:** *California's Flavored Tobacco Products Retail Law* | tinyurl.com/FlavorsFAQ
- **California Law Updates:** *Unflavored Tobacco List and Enforcement of the Flavored Tobacco Products Law* | tinyurl.com/LawUpdates



Scan the QR code or visit the California Tobacco Control Branch website for more information:
tinyurl.com/CDPHCATobaccoControlBranch.



TIPS TO SUCCEED WITHOUT TOBACCO

HIGH MARGIN PRODUCTS: REPLACEMENT ITEMS THAT INCREASE SALES

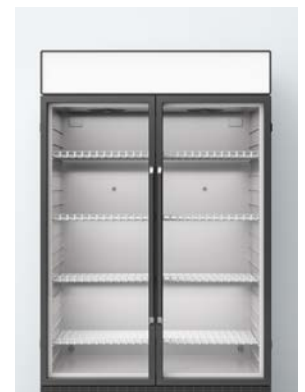
- **Fresh prepared foods:**
 - Deli sandwiches, flat breads, pizzas, soups, and salads
- **Coffee drinks:**
 - Upgrade coffee stations and offer gourmet and specialty brews
- **Produce:**
 - Fresh fruits and vegetables
- **Basic groceries:**
 - Milk, eggs, and yogurt
- **Cultural cuisine and specialty products:**
 - Align with cultures in your area
- **Local souvenirs:**
 - T-shirts, mugs, decals, holiday gifts and decorations, toys, or water bottles
- **Refreshments:**
 - Sparkling water, fruit drinks, health drinks, or iced tea
- **Snacking:**
 - Protein bars, protein snack boxes, holiday foods, or specialty candy
- **Emergency & recreation supplies:**
 - Flashlights, batteries, coolers, portable power banks, Bluetooth speakers, or bottled water
- **Sundries & electronic accessories:**
 - Toilet paper, tissues, wipes, condoms, cleaning and pet supplies, fidget toys, blind boxes, or cell phone accessories
- **Food 'to go' offerings:**
 - Partner with local vendors, grocers and caterers for rotisserie chicken or ribs, take & bake pizzas, hot meals, and desserts



For more information about high product margin products, visit the website here: tinyurl.com/TobaccoFreeTrinityMaterials.

THE HEALTHY REFRIGERATION GRANT PROGRAM

To find more information about the Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program, visit the website, tinyurl.com/HealthyRefrigerationGrant.



Subscribe to the *Live Well San Diego* Business Sector E-Newsletter for training, funding, and networking opportunities to boost operations and ensure compliance, visit the website, tinyurl.com/LWSDBusinessNewsletter.

CHANGING SALES TACTICS AND BUSINESS PRACTICES

Try an incremental process - one thing at a time.

TIPS FOR INVOLVING CUSTOMERS

- **Cash discounting:**
 - Display signs, no card fees
- **Social media contests for giveaways:**
 - Share the post or take a photo and share to be entered in a contest for a prize
- **Customer loyalty:**
 - Punch cards for a free item



INCREASE ONLINE PRESENCE

- Create or update a website for retailer business.
- Try social media promotions on Facebook, Instagram, or Google.
- Update business information on Google Maps or other search engines.



OTHER STRATEGIES TO INCREASE SALES

- Register with a delivery service like DoorDash, Instacart, or Uber Eats.
- Sign up to be a vendor that accepts Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.
- Consider offering:
 - Money orders,
 - Video rental box,
 - ATM,
 - Lottery tickets, and
 - Outside vending machines for water and ice.



LEARN MORE ABOUT DELIVERY SERVICES

- [Door Dash for Merchants | tinyurl.com/DoorDashUS](https://tinyurl.com/DoorDashUS)
- [InstaCart Inquiries | tinyurl.com/InstaCartform](https://tinyurl.com/InstaCartform)
- [UberEats for Merchants | tinyurl.com/UberEatsInquiry](https://tinyurl.com/UberEatsInquiry)

HELP FOR RETAILERS

BECOME A WOMEN, INFANTS, & CHILDREN (WIC) VENDOR

How do I apply to accept benefits?

Find out more about becoming a WIC authorized vendor. Applications for new store locations are accepted year-round. See application information below:

- **EBT Requirements** | tinyurl.com/EBTrequirements
- **WIC Point of Sale System** | tinyurl.com/WICPOSSystem

Apply to become a WIC authorized vendor!

The Vendor Application Package consists of the following documents:

- **WIC Vendor Application** | tinyurl.com/WICVendorApplication
- **WIC Vendor Agreement Form** | tinyurl.com/VendorAgreementForm
- **New Vendor Store Instructions** | tinyurl.com/NewVendorStoreInstructions

What documents do I need to provide?

Submitting all the required items may result in expedited processing of your Vendor Application Packet. All required items are listed below:

- Health Permit,
- Parent Company Information (if applicable),
- Additional Vendor Ownership Disclosure Information (if applicable), and
- California Sales and Use Tax Forms.

How do I submit my completed application?

Upon completion of the Vendor Application Packet, please follow the instructions for submitting your the packet here: tinyurl.com/NewVendorSubmission.

Additional vendor resources

- **WIC Vendor Criteria** | tinyurl.com/WICVendorCriteria
- **WIC Authorized Shopping Guide** | tinyurl.com/WICAuthorizedShoppingGuide

For support, email WICVendorInfo@cdph.ca.gov or call (855) 942-7867.

INFORMATION ABOUT BECOMING A CALFRESH/SNAP/EBT VENDOR

How do I apply to accept benefits?

If you are a Retail Food Store, you can apply to accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) benefits at your store by following the steps below.

Retailer | Food and Nutrition Service | tinyurl.com/SNAPRetailer

If you are not a Retail Food Store:

- Do not fill out an application, and
- Call the SNAP Retail Service Center at 1(877) 823-4369 or find them at Retailer Service Center | tinyurl.com/RetailerServiceCenter.

If you are a retailer that wants to accept SNAP-EBT on your website or mobile app:

- Do not complete this application, and
- Follow the requirements listed on the retailer requirements page, or visit tinyurl.com/RetailerRequirements.

1. Create a Login.gov account

- Before you start your application, you must create an account on login.gov/create-an-account/ | tinyurl.com/loggingovcreateaccount.
- The following information is needed:
 - Email address,
 - Secure password, and
 - One additional authentication method to keep your account secure (for example, a mobile phone number to receive texts for verification).

2. Complete the SNAP Retailer Application | tinyurl.com/SNAPRetailerApplication

- Once you start your application, you have 30 days to complete it. If your application is not complete within 30 days, it will be deleted.
- You will need to submit the required supporting documents.
- Instructions for submitting your documents are provided at the end of the application. Make sure that you have name(s), home address(es), and Social Security Number(s) for each store owner, and sales data your store(s).
- If you own 10 or more stores, consider whether you are a Multi-Store Owner | tinyurl.com/MultiStoreOwner.

3. Wait for a Decision from Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

- FNS will process your application and we will contact you if we need any further information.
- After you complete it, you can check the SNAP Application Status | tinyurl.com/SNAPApplicationStatus in real time.
- If you have additional questions, please call the SNAP Retailer Service Center at 1(877) 823-4369 or find them at Retailer Service Center | tinyurl.com/RetailerServiceCenter.



HELP FOR RETAILERS - CHULA VISTA

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS

Identify Successful Products and Increased Profits

San Diego South County Economic Development Council

tinyurl.com/SouthCountyEDC

780 Bay Blvd. Suite 204

Chula Vista, CA 91910

(619) 424-5143

Service Corps of Retired Executives of San Diego Free Business Mentoring

tinyurl.com/RequestSCOREmentor

8825 Aero Drive, Ste 101

San Diego, CA 92123

(858) 283-1100

Small Business Administration

tinyurl.com/SBASanDiego

550 West C St., Suite 550

San Diego, CA 92101

(619) 557-7250

San Diego Women's Business Center

tinyurl.com/SanDiegoWBC

880 National City Blvd.

National City, CA 91950

(619) 216-6719

TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED

- Free individual counseling & no/low-cost training.
- Free one-on-one consulting.
- Workshops for building websites with e-commerce for clientele.
- Help to determine need for financial assistance to grow your small business.
- Help to adapt your operations for more high margin products.

SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC (SDG&E)

Small Business Opportunity Program

The program's authorized contractors work with qualified small business customers to identify ways to save money on utility bills through energy-efficient upgrades. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/SDGESmallBusiness.

SMALL BUSINESS EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Signage and Façade Improvement Program National City

SFIP assists local businesses with signage compliance and improving the appearance of existing businesses. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/NationalCitySIP.



HELP FOR RETAILERS - CITY OF SAN DIEGO

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS

Identify Successful Products and Increased Profits

Small Business Development Centers San Diego and Imperial Counties

tinyurl.com/SBDCSanDiego

7675 Dagget St., Suite 340

San Diego, CA 92111

(858) 277-2822

Service Corps of Retired Executives of San Diego Free Business Mentoring

tinyurl.com/RequestSCOREmentor

8825 Aero Drive, Ste 101

San Diego, CA 92123

(858) 283-1100

SoCal Veterans Business Outreach Center

tinyurl.com/SoCalVBOC

2075 Las Palmas Drive

Carlsbad, CA 92011

(760) 796-8739

Small Business Administration

tinyurl.com/SBASanDiego

550 West C St., Suite 550

San Diego, CA 92101

(619) 557-7250

TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED

- Free individual counseling & no/low-cost training.
- Free one-on-one consulting.
- Workshops for building websites with e-commerce for clientele.
- Help to determine need for financial assistance to grow your small business.
- Help to adapt your operations for more high margin products.

SMALL BUSINESS EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Storefront Improvement Program

This program is set up to help small businesses create and implement a plan for improving their street-facing appearance.

City of San Diego Economic Development Program

For more information, visit tinyurl.com/SanDiegoSIP.

HELP FOR RETAILERS - EAST COUNTY

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS

Identify Successful Products and Increased Profits

**East County Economic Development
Council San Diego East County Region**

tinyurl.com/EastCountyEDC

127 E. Lexington Avenue
El Cajon, CA 92020
(619) 258-3670

**Service Corps of Retired Executives of
San Diego Free Business Mentoring**

tinyurl.com/RequestSCOREmentor

8825 Aero Drive, Ste 101
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 283-1100

**San Diego Regional East County
Chamber of Commerce**

tinyurl.com/EastCountyChamber

201 S. Magnolia Ave.
El Cajon, CA 92020
(619) 440-6161

TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED

- Free individual counseling & no/low-cost training.
- Free one-on-one consulting.
- Workshops for building websites with e-commerce for clientele.
- Help to determine need for financial assistance to grow your small business.
- Help to adapt your operations for more high margin products.

SMALL BUSINESS SAFETY PROGRAMS

Sheriff's Program - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

The San Diego County Sheriff's Crime Prevention Unit strives to reduce crime and improve quality of life in partnership with the communities they serve. Stay aware of the latest commercial security practices and resources to combat crime. This service is available in Lemon Grove and in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County. Request a Crime Prevention Specialist. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/SDCrimePrevention.

SDG&E Small Business Energy Savings Program

The program's authorized contractors work with qualified small business customers to identify ways to save money on utility bills through energy-efficient upgrades. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/SDGESmallBusiness.



HELP FOR RETAILERS - OCEANSIDE

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS

Identify Successful Products and Increased Profits

Small Business Development Centers North San Diego County

tinyurl.com/SBDCSanDiego

333 Manchester Avenue Cardiff,
Oceanside, CA 92007

(760) 795-8740

Service Corps of Retired Executives of San Diego Free Business Mentoring

tinyurl.com/RequestSCOREMentor

8825 Aero Drive, Ste 101
San Diego, CA 92123

(858) 283-1100

SoCal Veterans Business Outreach Center

tinyurl.com/SoCalVBOC

2075 Las Palmas Drive
Carlsbad, CA 92011

(760) 796-8739

Small Business Administration

tinyurl.com/SBASanDiego

550 West C St., Suite 550
San Diego, CA 92101

(619) 557-7250

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- Free one-on-one consulting.
- Workshops for building websites with e-commerce for clientele.
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- Help to adapt your operations for more high margin products.

SMALL BUSINESS SAFETY PROGRAMS

Oceanside Police Department - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Request a Crime Prevention Specialist. Offers basic tips to reduce crime and improve business safety. Evaluations upon request for businesses and facilities experiencing issues related to calls for service. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/OceansideCPTED.

SDG&E Small Business Energy Savings Program

The program's authorized contractors work with qualified small business customers to identify ways to save money on utility bills through energy-efficient upgrades. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/SDGESmallBusiness.



HELP FOR RETAILERS - POWAY

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE ORGANIZATIONS

Identify Successful Products and Increased Profits

Small Business Development Centers North San Diego County

tinyurl.com/SBDCSanDiego

333 Manchester Avenue Cardiff,
Oceanside, CA 92007

(760) 795-8740

Service Corps of Retired Executives of San Diego Free Business Mentoring

tinyurl.com/RequestSCOREMentor

8825 Aero Drive, Ste 101
San Diego, CA 92123

(858) 283-1100

SoCal Veterans Business Outreach Center

tinyurl.com/SoCalVBOC

2075 Las Palmas Drive
Carlsbad, CA 92011

(760) 796-8739

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tinyurl.com/SBASanDiego

550 West C St., Suite 550
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TESTIMONIALS

TESTIMONIALS FROM SAN DIEGO COUNTY RETAILERS

La Tiendita Mexican Market



La Tiendita Mexican Market has been a cherished part of the Clairemont community for over 35 years, celebrated for its warm atmosphere and authentic charm reminiscent of a traditional Mexican market. Known statewide for its community-driven approach, long-term employees have built strong customer relationships, catering to Hispanic customers.

Cesar Sanchez took over the business from his father who stopped selling tobacco products 15 years ago. "My father, a former smoker, wanted to set a positive example and ensure a safe space for kids. He found tobacco sales unprofitable and stopping the sales of tobacco products reduced the risk of fines and fees."

"My advice is to replace tobacco products with toiletries, medicinal supplies, and ready to eat meals. We offer excellent customer service and specialized products like our high-quality meat counter, authentic Mexican groceries for Mexican-themed meals, and fresh produce. We use Facebook and Instagram for marketing and offer EBT and money transfer services to Mexico. At La Tiendita, it's about more than just products—it's about being a positive influence and creating a place where everyone feels welcome."

[Visit La Tiendita Mexican Market's Facebook Page](#)

Linda Vista Market



The owners of Linda Vista Market have operated the store for seven years and their success is rooted in being a trusted resource for the tight-knit community of Linda Vista. Tobacco products were sold by the previous owner, but the current owners chose not to sell tobacco or alcohol to prevent exposure to children. Their decision was driven by the desire to maintain a family-friendly environment and avoid tobacco licensing fees and paperwork. Parents in the community appreciate the safer atmosphere for their children. According to the owners, "By choosing not to sell tobacco or alcohol, we've created a safe, family-friendly environment where parents feel comfortable letting their kids roam the store freely."

The store reflects the familiarity and comfort of markets "back home," resonating with the community. The owners considered a remodel but decided to maintain the store's nostalgic feel for their customers. Some of their more profitable items are fresh meats from the meat counter, hot meals, and quality groceries. The owners pride themselves in creating a local market where their customers know each other by name and feel connected. "Whether we're helping kids with homework or assisting monolingual customers with paperwork, we prioritize lifting up our neighborhood and fostering a positive environment for everyone."

[Visit Linda Vista Market's Facebook Page](#)



TESTIMONIALS FROM SAN DIEGO COUNTY RETAILERS

El Paisano Victor's Market



For the past nine years, El Paisano Victor's Market, has built their store around the Latino values of family and health, and providing all the amenities of a much larger market to their customers in their small store. The market offers conveniences such as fresh produce, carniceria, Mexican-staple hot meals from the in-store taco shop, EBT and WIC, money transfers, and hot meal delivery services. From the start, the owners decided not to sell tobacco or alcohol for the well-being of families and children in their neighborhood and community.

The store features a colorful ethnic mural on its exterior, reflecting the culture, values, and heritage of their community. Inside, the store is bright, festive, clean and well-organized, with clearly labeled WIC products creating a fun family-friendly atmosphere. Owners Victor and Angelica have invested in conveniences such as a coffee machine near the front door, over-the-counter medications, and toiletries. As well as delivering meals from their taco shop through DoorDash and Uber Eats has further allowed them to share the heart of their market with even more households.

Victor shared, "Our high-margin products include meat, Mexican specialties, and warm food-to-go options. We offer EBT and WIC to attract families. We strive to create our store as a hub of familiarity and comfort for the local community, balancing essential products with cultural and family-oriented services."

[Visit El Paisano Victor's Market's Instagram Page](#)

Mid-East Market



For over 45 years Mid-East Market has been a family-run business and has proudly served the Middle Eastern, immigrant, and San Diego Mid-City communities with halal meats, organic products, and specialty items from around the globe. The store focuses on healthier, high-demand and unique products not commonly found in other stores like bulk spices, organic foods, perfumes, fresh produce, and local high-quality meats. They expanded from a halal meat market to an international grocery store with products from Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and India. Responding to customer needs, they work with importers to provide unique cultural offerings, such as traditional Middle Eastern clothing.

The market sold tobacco products for 15 years but stopped 10 years ago due to high fees, extensive paperwork, risks from underage decoy operations, and competition from nearby tobacco retailers. Alex, the store owner, states, "Removing tobacco has helped us stand out in a market where tobacco is already widely available." Tobacco products were previously displayed behind the counter but are now replaced with perfumes. "We had a lot of customer feedback questioning why a health-focused store would sell something so harmful as tobacco products. As a business, we emphasize being responsive to customer needs, helping establish loyalty and trust within the community."

[Visit Mid-East Market's Website](#)



TESTIMONIALS FROM SAN DIEGO COUNTY RETAILERS

Kupanda African and Caribbean Market



Kupanda African and Caribbean Market is family-owned and operated for the last 2 years by Joseph Ekyoci and his wife, Tiba Wasaidy. This vibrant market thrives by meeting the community and customer needs with a wide variety of authentic African and Caribbean food, spices, and products, bringing a taste of exotic far-away places to the local community. The owners have built a strong social media following (particularly on TikTok), where they share cooking videos and recipes using store products (e.g., fish and plantains).

According to Joseph, “Social media has been a game-changer for us, showcasing recipes and testimonials that help build a loyal customer base. We prioritize authentic African and Caribbean products that our customers can’t find elsewhere.”

The market specializes in imported products and spices, including small sardines from Tanzania and plantains from Los Angeles and other products that bring a taste of home. They also accept EBT, attracting customers from the Mid-City area who value the authentic and culturally relevant products available at the store. The market has never sold tobacco products to avoid the high-cost licensing fees. In the community, Joseph is seen as a leader, and he often helps customers outside of normal business hours. “As a leader in the community, I want my store to represent health, culture, and support—not tobacco.”

[Visit Kupanda African and Caribbean Market's Website](#)

African Caribbean Food Market



For 25 years, African Caribbean Food Market has specialized in fresh vegetables and canned produce specific to African and Caribbean communities that are difficult to find elsewhere. The store’s focus on serving these immigrant communities has helped it maintain success over the years, with a reputation for providing essential and culturally significant products at competitive prices. Known for great customer service and low prices, customers often return after seeing higher prices at other specialty stores.

Although not selling tobacco meant less paperwork and fewer regulations, it was not the primary consideration in their decision. The owners never wanted to sell tobacco products and alcohol because it goes against their values.

Accepting EBT has been a significant boost to the store sales, especially as they serve low-income families who rely on it to purchase fresh African Caribbean ingredients for healthy meals. Christian, the store owner, shared, “our success comes from listening to our customers and prioritizing their needs, and since most of our clientele uses EBT, it’s a crucial part of our business. We’re proud to support their well-being by offering affordable, nutritious options instead of harmful products like tobacco.”

[Visit African Caribbean Food Market's Facebook Page](#)



TESTIMONIALS FROM SAN DIEGO COUNTY RETAILERS

Somali Bantu Association of America (Sbaao) K&S Halal Market



The success of K & S Halal Market stems from being a trusted community hub and resource, providing fresh halal meats and ethnic foods, essential goods, and resources that benefit the community and create a family-friendly environment. The market, located in the City Heights neighborhood of San Diego, is family-owned and operated with exceptionally friendly staff take great pride in their store's reputation in the neighborhood. The market offers customers fresh produce, over-the-counter medicines, cultural health remedies, prepared foods, and halal-certified products. The focus is to support families, with 75% of their customers relying on EBT and 20% using WIC, offering their own delivery services to seniors for

ingredients and produce, instead of using third-party services like DoorDash or Instacart.

A weekly super food pantry stocked with local donations has customers lined up out the door and down the sidewalk. Finally, the store plays an important role in supporting the community by distributing flyers from local service agencies to connect people with help and resources.

No tobacco products are sold due to religious beliefs associated with halal practices, which prohibit the use of tobacco. Selling tobacco or allowing tobacco smoke outside the store would drive away customers, especially within the community. The owner supports smokefree policies and has worked with the Nile Sisters organization. More profitable items include meat and pastas imported from Los Angeles and Milwaukee. Owner, Sade, says, "My advice to other store owners would be to replace tobacco with convenience items such as fresh prepared foods, over-the-counter medicines, cultural health remedies, toiletries, cleaning supplies, and fresh produce, which are essential to the community; to build lasting success and a positive impact."

[Visit Sbaao K&S Halal Market's Website](#)

Sin Lee Food



Sin Lee Foods has been a long-standing pillar in San Diego's Little Saigon, supporting diverse cultures and communities since its founding by Vietnamese immigrants. The business has grown from a small poultry retailer into a reputable grocery and spirits provider, dedicated to delivering fresh, high-quality food while honoring the community and family legacy.

The store specializes in authentic Asian products, particularly high-margin packaged and canned goods catering to the Vietnamese community. It supports the family's chicken production business in Los Angeles, by selling chicken to local restaurants.

Andy Tang, currently one of the owners, shared, "Our decision to stop selling tobacco was due to low demand. In over 25 years, only a handful of people have asked for cigarettes, as customers primarily come for food. Stopping tobacco sales meant less paperwork and no need for tobacco licensing, making the operation simpler. Selling tobacco products isn't worth it; we make more money from other products, especially food and spirits."

[Visit Sin Lee Food's Website](#)



APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

When to call 911 vs. Sheriff Dispatch or the local Police Department

Call 911 if any of these situations are happening in the parking lot of or on business property:

- Crime & Trash at Your Backdoor
- Potholes
- *Live Well San Diego* Business Sector Newsletter offers business news, resources, tools, events and webinars to help support your business.
 - [Live Well San Diego Business Sector](https://tinyurl.com/LiveWellBusinessSector) | tinyurl.com/LiveWellBusinessSector
- Sign up for the [Live Well San Diego Newsletter](https://tinyurl.com/LiveWellBusinessNewsletter) | tinyurl.com/LiveWellBusinessNewsletter

ADDITIONAL CITY RESOURCES

- Chula Vista (see page 19)
- City of San Diego (see page 20)
- East County (see page 21)
- Oceanside (see page 22)
- Poway (see page 23)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES - CHULA VISTA

When to call 911 vs. Sheriff Dispatch or the Chula Vista Police Department

Call **911** if any of these situations are happening in the parking lot of or on business property:

- Fighting,
- Illegal drug use/sales,
- Car theft or burglary in progress,
- Graffiti in progress,
- Brandishing weapons or threats of violence, and
- Any felony crime in progress.

Call the Sheriff's non-emergency dispatch at (858) 565-5200 or the Chula Vista Police Department non-emergency dispatch at (619) 691-5151 for the following situations:

- Aggressive panhandling,
- Trespassing,
- Loitering,
- Alcohol use in parking lot, and
- New graffiti or vandalism (not in progress).

CRIME & TRASH AT YOUR BACKDOOR?

There can be unwanted activity in the alley behind your business. A few ways to reduce this are:

- Maintain cleanliness of the store interior and exterior, including trash receptacles and graffiti removal.
- Provide adequate lighting at entrances, exits, and parking lots.
- Lock all dumpsters whenever possible to discourage illicit activity and reduce excess trash.

POTHoles

Potholes on the road near a business can discourage customers from visiting an establishment. A phone call can make all the difference.

To report a pothole near your business in Chula Vista call the Public Works Dispatch at (619) 397-6000.

Use the "SD County Tell Us Now" app for Android or iPhone to report potholes in the unincorporated area. Note: Potholes in the parking lot of a business are the responsibility of the property owner.



Residents can use **ACT Chula Vista** | tinyurl.com/ACTChulaVistaServiceRequest to report issues such as graffiti, potholes, dead animal, malfunctioning traffic signal, or an abandoned vehicle.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES - CITY OF SAN DIEGO

When to call 911 vs Sheriff Dispatch or the City of San Diego Police Department

Call **911** if any of these situations are happening in the parking lot of or on business property:

- Fighting,
- Illegal drug use/sales,
- Car theft or burglary in progress,
- Graffiti in progress,
- Brandishing weapons or threats of violence, and
- Any felony crime in progress.

The following are appropriate situations to call the Sheriff's non-emergency dispatch at (858) 565-5200 or the San Diego Police Department non-emergency dispatch at (619) 531-2000 or (858) 484-3154:

- Aggressive panhandling,
- Trespassing,
- Loitering,
- Alcohol use in parking lot, and
- New graffiti or vandalism (not in progress).

CRIME & TRASH AT YOUR BACKDOOR?

There can be unwanted activity in the alley behind your business. A few strategies to reduce this are:

- Maintain cleanliness of the store interior and exterior, including trash receptacles and graffiti removal.
- Provide adequate lighting for all entrances, exits, and parking lots.
- Lock all dumpsters whenever possible to discourage illicit activity and reduce excess trash.

POTHoles

Potholes on the road near a business can discourage customers from visiting an establishment. A phone call can make all the difference.

To report a pothole repair 24-hours a day, seven days a week, call (619) 527-7500 or by use the online system, [Service Request | tinypurl.com/SDGetItDone](https://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/ServiceRequest/tinypurl.com/SDGetItDone).

Use the "SD County Tell Us Now" app for Android or iPhone to report potholes in the unincorporated area. Note: Potholes in a parking lot of a business are the responsibility of the property owner.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES - EAST COUNTY

When to call 911 vs. Lemon Grove Sheriff Dispatch or the El Cajon Police Department

Call **911** if any of these situations are happening in the parking lot of or on business property:

- Fighting,
- Illegal drug use/sales,
- Car theft or burglary in progress,
- Graffiti in progress,
- Brandishing weapons or threats of violence, and
- Any felony crime in progress.

The following are appropriate situations to call the Lemon Grove Sheriff's non-emergency dispatch at (858) 565-5200 or the El Cajon Police Department non-emergency dispatch at (619) 579-5200:

- Aggressive panhandling,
- Trespassing,
- Loitering,
- Alcohol use in parking lot, and
- New graffiti, or vandalism (not in progress).

CRIME & TRASH AT YOUR BACKDOOR?

There can be unwanted activity in the alley behind your business. A few ways to reduce this problem is:

- Maintain cleanliness of the store interior and exterior, including trash receptacles and graffiti removal.
- Provide adequate lighting at all entrances, exits, and parking lots.
- Lock all dumpsters whenever possible to discourage illicit activity and reduce excess trash.

POTHOLES

Potholes on the road near a business can discourage customers from visiting an establishment. A phone call can make all the difference.

To report a pothole near your business in El Cajon, you can call the El Cajon Public Works Maintenance Operations at (619) 441-1658. Hours of Operation are Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Use the "SD County Tell Us Now" app for Android or iPhone to report potholes in the unincorporated area. Note: Potholes in a parking lot of a business are the responsibility of the property owner.



To report a pothole near your business in Lemon Grove please fill out the tinyurl.com/LemonGroveReportanIssue.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES - OCEANSIDE

WHEN TO CALL 911 VS SHERIFF DISPATCH OR THE OCEANSIDE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Call **911** if any of these situations are happening in the parking lot of or on business property:

- Fighting,
- Illegal drug use/sales,
- Car theft or burglary in progress,
- Graffiti in progress,
- Brandishing weapons or threats of violence, and
- Any felony crime in progress.

The following are appropriate situations to call the Sheriff's non-emergency dispatch at (858) 565-5200 or the Oceanside Police Department non-emergency dispatch at (760) 435-4900:

- Aggressive panhandling,
- Trespassing,
- Loitering,
- Alcohol use in parking lot, and
- New graffiti or vandalism (not in progress).

CRIME & TRASH AT YOUR BACKDOOR?

There can be unwanted activity in the alley behind your business. A few ways to reduce this are:

- Maintain cleanliness of the store interior and exterior, including trash receptacles and graffiti removal.
- Provide adequate lighting at all entrances, exits, and parking lots.
- Lock all dumpsters whenever possible to discourage illicit activity and reduce excess trash.

POTHOLES

Potholes on the road near a business can discourage customers from visiting an establishment. A phone call can make all the difference.

For questions about street maintenance or to report raised sidewalks, potholes, or other deficiencies, please call (760) 435-4500 or email

CustomerCare@ci.oceanside.ca.us.

Use the "SD County Tell Us Now" app for Android or iPhone to report potholes in the unincorporated area. Note: Potholes in a parking lot of a business are the responsibility of the property owner.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES - POWAY

WHEN TO CALL 911 VS SHERIFF DISPATCH

Call **911** if any of these situations are happening in the parking lot of or on business property:

- Fighting,
- Illegal drug use/sales,
- Car theft or burglary in progress,
- Graffiti in progress,
- Brandishing weapons or threats of violence, and
- Any felony crime in progress.

The following are appropriate situations to call the Sheriff's non-emergency dispatch at **(858) 565-5200**:

- Aggressive panhandling,
- Trespassing,
- Loitering,
- Alcohol use in parking lot, and
- New graffiti or vandalism (not in progress).

CRIME & TRASH AT YOUR BACKDOOR?

There can be unwanted activity in the alley behind your business. A few ways to reduce this are:

- Maintain cleanliness of the store interior and exterior, including trash receptacles and graffiti removal.
- Provide adequate lighting at all entrances, exits, and parking lots.
- Lock all dumpsters whenever possible to discourage illicit activity and reduce excess trash.

POTHOLES

Potholes on the road near a business can discourage customers from visiting an establishment. A phone call for repair can make all the difference.

Use the [Poway City App | tinyurl.com/PowayCityApp](https://tinyurl.com/PowayCityApp) to report maintenance issues or other problems. Submit a request through the app or call **(858) 668-4700**, and the relevant authorities will be notified.

Use the "SD County Tell Us Now" app for Android or iPhone to report potholes in the unincorporated area. Note: Potholes in a parking lot of a business are the responsibility of the property owner.





The Public Health Services department, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, has maintained national public health accreditation, since May 17, 2016, and was re-accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board on August 21, 2023.

